

A 21ST CENTURY RESOURCE GUIDE TO ASSIST
COUPLES IN MAINTAINING THE FIDELITY
AND SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS.....	3
2. THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL.....	37
3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION.....	58
4. METHODOLOGY.....	82
5. FIELD EXPERIENCE.....	90
6. REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSIONS.....	96
APPENDIX	
A. DIVINE FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES.....	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	116

ABSTRACT

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The focus of this dissertation will provide couples with relevant and practical marital tools. Using Divine Fellowship Ministries as the context for this research and combining qualitative-quantitative action research methodology, the researcher employs the use of focus groups, brief surveys, field observations, and questionnaires to provide a summative evaluation. Statistics show that 50% of marriages end in divorce and 90% of these divorces were due to finances. The eight weeks of research finds that after utilizing proper tools and participation within pertinent training sessions, couples indicated a joint vision, set guidelines, and more equipped for various challenges in their relationship.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the following: the researcher's husband, David Sam and children who endured the research journey and enabled me to see first-hand the implementation of knowledge obtained; her late mother and late brother, Reverend Elaine Smith Crump and Reverend David Joshua Crump whom consistently impacted her life as godly examples. The intercessory prayers and support of peers/colleagues at UTS, SOFCC and co-workers have embedded life-long friendships.

INTRODUCTION

Having personally experienced the devastation of a failed first marriage and not wanting to repeat this vicious cycle, I strive to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, solid counsel, continuous learning and positive role models to avoid repeating past failures. Through godly knowledge, training with effective tools, and personal experience coupled with accountability, marriages can experience positive growth.

In today's information technology age, there are many resources available to couples. However, it would take years to filter through the vast database to distinguish between excellent, good, or misleading material regarding marriage. This project attempts to fast forward a couples research journey and bring together resources that couples may use to propel their relationship to wholeness in every area of life (finances, health, family/marriage, spiritually and emotionally).

Chapter one is my spiritual journey; a series of events that led me to this place of ministry and experiences that may result in benefits for others. The context and synergy evolved because of a problem that needs to be solved.

Chapter two is the literature connected to this research of other authors cited to provide relevant information in support of this research.

Chapter three examines the historical, biblical, and theological areas for this model.

Chapter four is the methodology and the design utilized in compiling, analyzing and gathering data used in the field experience. Included in this chapter are the hypothesis, the intervention (Description of Ministry Project), the research design, the measurement, and the instrumentation plan.

Chapter five is the result/outcome of data analysis, while chapter six comprises expressions on the field experience, summaries, and conclusions of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Joy Sam is the daughter of Reverends Izell and the late Elaine S. Crump. She is the youngest of seven siblings and all were given biblical names. Joy recalls after church on Sundays, her parents often had more than thirty people to come for dinner. Her mom's excellent cooking was no secret. The backyard was often filled with members' children in the community. There were just as many children in the large backyard playing basketball, football, baseball, etc. as there were many adults in the home.

As a family, they attended church at least three days a week. They often traveled out of state to attend revivals where her parents and/or uncle would speak. Joy parents, served in various roles in the local and international community such as pastors, entrepreneurs, and philanthropists. Joy's mother passed, in 2010, with fifty years of marriage to her father.

Joy's parents help to instill a positive Christian foundation. Her parents were strict in their parenting, which helped her to stay out of some trouble. To her knowledge, none of her siblings are addicted to alcohol, drugs or incarcerated. Her mother was an advocate for ensuring that her children received educational opportunities. Her mother was very supportive of all of her siblings.

When Joy's mother was a youth, she pioneered the city's first interfaith holiness church fellowship, with school friends and youth throughout the city and state. This was in spite of the fact that none of the pastors of the different congregations during those

times condoned such youth fellowship. They conducted community outreach on Saturdays, visiting neighborhoods and inviting youth to come and worship. They sold dinners as fundraisers, invited other choirs, packed out the church, and had a Holy Ghost good ole' time full of music and young preaching.

Joy's father is an example of a great provider. He would purchase seven gallons of milk each week to ensure that his children were healthy. Joy never recalls being hungry for lack of food. Although Joy's parents were strict, she acknowledges that her parents' prayer covering made up for the difference.

Joy's mother would travel hours to get fresh food from the farm. She would use the best and healthiest ingredients when cooking. Her mom would hand wash her collard greens and pick green beans. She would purchase and bake the biggest turkey and smoked turkey available, as much as 40 lbs. She would make mashed potatoes from red potatoes, candy yams, baked macaroni and cheese and homemade rolls.

After dinner, the family would gather around while my mother or brother played the organ and sing Christian songs. The presence of the Lord would bring healing during these worship and praise moments. Extended family members and friends would gather near and from far away for these fellowships at my parents' home.

At the young age of seven, Joy began her entrepreneurial endeavors selling frozen cups in the neighborhood. With time, she expanded her business to make and sell homemade cookies after church. Joy saw the need to have refreshments after church service and provided an exceptional supply at a reasonable price. Since Joy was very business minded, her family would make homemade sweet potato pies and Joy would sell them after church with ice cold sodas. Needless to say, she was enriched with spiritual

and natural blessings. Although she was the youngest, her siblings would often come to her to borrow money.

When Joy was eight years old, she traveled with her parents to Toronto, Canada. Her parents' and uncle were the main speakers at a large Christian crusade. She remembers singing in front of thousands and the presence of God was all over. Unlike most trips, Joy's siblings did not travel with them. Joy ceased the moment to sell her parents' and uncle's ministry tapes. Since Joy listened attentively to these recorded messages, she was able to tell people what each tape consists of. Her parents rewarded her with a wonderful compensation for her needed services and success in tape sales. Joy loves traveling and credits her parents for helping her to see most of the United States and travel internationally.

While Joy was in middle school, she began going to movies on half days with her friends. She did not tell her parents because they would not approve. This behavior would lead to Joy exploring what her peers did. She observed that the peers that sold and/or used drugs, lives were taken at a very early age. She also observed that these peers' girlfriends were getting pregnant during middle school. Although Joy tasted alcohol and tried a cigarette once, she believes that God's hand on her life helped her to not have any desire for alcohol, smoking or drugs.

At the age of thirteen, Joy was invited to Pat Kelly Christian Camp. There she rededicated her life to Christ. Unfortunately, the girl who led her to Christ became close to a male that Joy had previously gone out with. This experience hurt Joy but helped her to put her trust in God. Joy believes that God's grace kept her from teenage pregnancy.

In high school, she joined the Bible club in the 10th grade. Joy was asked to serve as president in the 11th grade. As president, the Bible club started with ten members and grew to seventy-five members. The Bible club would meet once a week in the morning and Joy would provide refreshments. Joy was able to lead many to a closer walk with God and also sang at the school wide events. One event in particular, her sister, who previously graduated from the same school, was the guest speaker.

At the end of the school year, Joy led an organized fellowship with other Christian groups in high school at the Fort Meade military base in Maryland. She was able to get a local Christian bus company to provide free transportation and her brother, David provided free food for everyone. In Joy's senior year, she asked her friend Stacy to be her successor with the Bible Club. This transition enabled Joy to pursue her business career in high school.

Joy continued her business pursuits selling dinners in the community with other members from the church. She was one of the top sellers. Her selling career was put on hold by her father when a man made improper gestures at her. She then began packing dinners for other teams from her parents' home. The dinners were such a success in Baltimore that her parents opened up a restaurant called Micah's Cafeteria & Carryout. Joy was one of the night cooks and cashiers. As the business grew, she was one of the best and fastest cashiers. Since the building was so large, her parents also used a section of the building to conduct worship services.

Therefore, Joy would go to church on Sunday morning, eat dinner in the restaurant and start work all in the same building. The restaurant was so successful that it was known nationally and internationally. Most of her siblings worked in the restaurant

unless they were attending school or out of state. Although Joy enjoyed the benefits of having a significant cash flow, purchasing her first car at sixteen, and supporting her sister who was attending college, she knew that restaurant business was hard work.

For Joy's senior prom, she wanted to go with a male friend but her parents would not allow her to date until she was eighteen years old. Joy made arrangements for her female friend and her brother, David, to go on a boat cruise on the night of her prom. This put her parents at ease and helped Joy to have her wish to go with a male friend. After the boat cruise, since her date had to work the late night shift, Joy went to the prom with her brother, David.

Joy's high school major was business. She had favor with teachers and the administration. She really enjoyed accounting in high school. She was the largest stockholder in her high school's business run by students. The business was very successful and she received a great return on her investment. Joy was nominated as Ms. Future Business Leader in her high school. She competed for Ms. Future Business Leader in a citywide competition and won. She continued to the statewide competition and also won. Joy graduated from high school with honor and as the Outstanding Business Leader.

Joy's parents were always doing something to help the community. During her formative years, they hosted Christian camps. Joy recalls the fine dinners given for high school and college graduates where special guests attended. Her parents' ministry has led many people to Christ. They would host large outdoor tent revivals. On various occasions, her parents donated catering for individuals, families and organizations, which included loved ones, such as one family who was burned in a fire and the first casualties of war in Maryland.

Immediately following high school, Joy continued her education in accounting at Morgan State University. During this time, she served as Youth President at the Christian Temple Faith Church, her parent's church. During this time, the youth department experienced tremendous growth. Joy incorporated fun, talent, and creativity into the Christian experience and worship service.

In college, Joy served as the president of the Morgan State University Accounting Club, which was a student chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants. She was a member of INROADS, an organization that helped with placing minority youth with professional organizations. Joy was awarded an intern with one of the world's largest accounting firms. She graduated from college with honors and continued her accounting career.

Joy recalls while in college her hand would become tingly and numb like. The same week, at church, a visiting pastor told Joy that God had given her the gift of healing and that the sign would be that her hand would become tingly and numb like. Joy began praying for people and asking God to heal them. People began testifying of God's healing through the laying on of hands. Joy believes that God is the healer and that he uses his children as vessels to bring healing to the sick.

Joy has witness the gift of healing on people very close to her. She recalls a member of her parents' church, had a heart attack in the middle of the night. His wife, who is in the medical profession, gave him CPR because he was no longer breathing. After much prayer, he recovered from the heart attack and is still alive. When he returned to church, he testified that while he was not breathing, his conversation with Jesus was that it was not time for him to come to heaven because his family needed him.

Another example of God healing is when Joy's aunt had an aneurism and the doctors did not believe she would make it. Through much prayer her aunt recovered and is alive today. Joy has also witness God's power during revivals. She recalls for several services that gold dust was appearing in Bibles, on the altar and on people's skin and clothes. Joy believes that this was one of the manifestations of God's presence in the worship service.

After college, Joy was engaged to be married to her prom night date. This relationship did not lead to marriage. Shortly thereafter, Joy was introduced to a friend of her brother, David. After dating for six months, they secretly eloped in California. A large public wedding followed five months later. Joy observed that instead of receiving marital counseling that would help sustain their marriage; the entire focus was on the wedding. Joy tried to encourage her parents to assist with a house down payment rather than spending a large amount of money on a wedding to invite people she did not know.

Instead, her parents decided to do a large wedding, with a 300-voice choir to the couple's surprise. The reception, catered by her brother, David was fine dining with plenty of seafood. The unfortunate part was that Joy's husband did not like seafood and many of the wedding guests, Joy may have seen once or twice in her life. The point is that the wedding was very expensive and not what the couple requested.

After the wedding, Joy and her husband began working together at her parents' business. This worked well for a short period while her eldest brother was leading the organization. During this time, Joy and her husband purchased their first home in a very nice community. The home was much out of their financial league and became a strain to

meet the monthly mortgage. The financial pressure and change in management at work created a strain on their marriage.

Joy traveled with her parents to Ghana, West Africa to visit her uncle who was receiving care. She packed a life survival package to ensure that there would be enough food. To her pleasant surprise, Joy really enjoyed the food prepared by the chef where they stayed. One of the pastors in Ghana told her that she would have a daughter. She was wondering how this would take place. Another church member in America had a previous dream that Joy had a beautiful baby girl.

The following year, Joy decided to begin her new life at a local Baptist Church and was baptized. Joy joined the choir and later the worship team. Joy faithfully attended weekly Bible study. She enjoyed studying the *Final Quest*, *Dream Giver*, and *God Chasers*.

The Final Quest helped Joy to understand the spiritual battle facing believers. It was very helpful for her to understand that Christians can grow in God and fall from any level. She learned that walking in humility helps her to overcome any pride from obtaining new levels in her spiritual growth.

The Dream Giver helped Joy to understand that living an ordinary life may be comfortable but is not God's ultimate vision for a her life. Joy was able to see the challenges when walking by faith and not by sight. She also understood that there are champions and role models that can encourage a person to press on and not give up.

The God Chasers helped Joy to understand that her walk with Christ needs to be pure and driven. Her fulfillment in life is having an intimate relationship with God. This book helped her to see that seeking God is the answer to all of life's challenges.

Joy has had some defining moments in her life. She recalls one experience where her life was filled with much pain because of her disobedience to God's word. She promised God that if he delivered her that she would obey his call on her life. Joy knows that it is only God's grace that helps a person to be victorious. She does not look down on others who have made decisions contrary to God's word. Instead, she tries to walk in love and pray that God will help bring others through difficult choices.

After serving for two years in the Baptist Church, Joy answered the call to join a word church. Joy was invited to the church by her brother David and his wife. She enjoyed the wholeness message received weekly for spiritual direction, finances, a healthy family, and career, to name a few. She loved that the church is Bible base in teaching and balanced in teaching people how to successfully live from day to day.

In October 2005, after being divorced for three years, she attended, with her ex-husband, a Marriage Builders weekend. Joy wanted to make sure that she had done everything possible to reconcile with her ex-husband before moving on with her life with someone else. When her ex-husband and she attended the workshop, she was searching for answers regarding why their marriage failed and whether there was hope of reconciliation, especially since they had a child together.

Joy loves her son and saw the emotional pain he went through when his dad was not around. She would dry her son's eyes when he cried in the middle of the night. Her ex-husband who was involved weekly with her son did not show up for over one year. This separation was very devastating to her son.

The pain she experienced through her failed first marriage has enabled her to help others to possibly avoid some of this pain. She believes that good pre-marriage

counseling and having life skills are a must for helping people to have a healthy marriage. Joy loves learning and participating in marriage fellowships, workshops, etc.

During this same period, she also went on a cruise to Barbados to celebrate her ex-husband's 40th birthday. Barbados was a destination that she had hoped, for several years, to travel to and finally did. The trip was somewhat of a healing from her previous marriage that ended in divorce, and later grew to a friendship where they traveled together and mutually shared in the upbringing of their son born from the marriage. Joy's intimacy with her ex-husband ended in December 2000, when it was evident that her husband would not return to the marriage.

Joy acknowledges that she has many positive role models. One of her role models was her brother, David, who was eight years her senior. David provided Joy with weekly outlets to have fun in a Christian manner. He would take her gospel skating at least once a week. These Christian fun outlets enabled Joy as a youth to practice her Christian faith. David continued to inspire Joy by serving as youth president and demonstrating that you can be a Christian and still have fun.

David led citywide gospel socials in Micah's dining room. These events were very successful. Local and national artists attended these events, including God's property. David would often host family and friends gatherings during the holidays.

At her family church, there were revivals from people who had incredible experiences with God. Mary Baxter, author of *Divine Revelation of Hell and Heaven*, spoke on multiple occasions. She helped Joy to understand better life after death. There were other speakers who built her faith that God is able to do the impossible. These

ministries were very instrumental for Joy believing God for a house and cars. One occasion, Joy helped nine people purchase their first new car.

For the 4th of July 2005, Joy recalls David and his wife hosting all the nephews at his home in Pennsylvania. Her brother came to Baltimore to pick up the children and Joy followed behind David's SUV, with her son and his friend. On the way to his home, David stopped to get refreshments for the children. At the rest stop, her brother introduced her to his friend who was riding with him; they attended the same church, and had the same name, "David."

This friend, also named David (Sam), moved to California, the following year to attend school. In July 2006, during a trip to California, with her son and nephew, she met the friend at Universal Studios, where he worked and they started dating long distance.

Joy received a phone call from a trusted church member who did not know she was dating. Joy's friend shared with Joy that she had a dream that she was marrying David. Since Carla's only knowledge of a David was Joy's brother, she did not understand her dream. Once she shared her dream with Joy, she understood that Joy was dating a man named David Sam, who was introduced to her by her brother, David.

The following month, Joy traveled back to Ghana, West Africa with David Sam to meet his family. During the trip, they decided to get engaged. In the fall of 2006, they both attended the Marriage Builders' Weekend in California.

Joy and her fiancé had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Harley. During her individual sessions with Dr. Harley, she discussed her new marriage plans and what she should do about her home from the first marriage, career changes, law school, etc. He was very helpful in giving her wisdom that at the time she did not understand but

followed. To this day, she is very grateful that she followed his advice. Dr. Harley is one of first inspirations for pursuing her aspiration to share with others her journey in pursuing a healthy relationship.

Dr. Willard Harley, founder and author of *His Needs, Her Needs*, describes the ten emotional needs of men and women. They are sex, affection, attractive spouse, conversation, honesty and openness, domestic support, family commitment, recreational companionship, financial support, and affirmation. He helps couples identify which are the most important for them self and for their spouse. Joy realizes that family commitment is very important.

Dr. Harley helped her to understand why her best intentions are not enough to prevent marital incompatibility. Marriage Builders weekend included a twelve-week take home course, private counseling, books/materials, and weekly progress reports. According to Dr. Harley, for her marriage to work, she had to do more than desire to meet her spouse's needs—she needs to actually meet them. Meeting her spouse needs is easiest when her needs are also met. She does not want ignorance to contribute to a failure to care for her spouse. Dr. Harley contends that often men and women tend to try to meet needs that they value. Since their needs are often very different, they waste effort trying to meet the wrong needs (See www.marriagebuilders.com).

Dr. Harley states that the right needs in marriage are so strong that when they are not met in marriage, people are tempted to go outside of marriage to satisfy them. Aside from the risks of extra marital affair(s), important emotional needs should be met for the sake of care itself. Marriage is a very special relationship. Promises are made to allow a

spouse the exclusive right to meet some of these important needs. When needs are unmet, a spouse is faced with few ethical alternatives.

One of Joy's goals is to have a healthy, affair proof marriage and to help others. In May 2006, she served as a Certified Public Accountant with the Administration for Children & Families for the funding of \$XXX million per year for the healthy marriage promotion and fatherhood to encourage States to strengthen marriages through The Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005. In 1996, Congress made the following findings [1]: Marriage is the foundation of a successful society. Marriage is an essential institution of a successful society, which promotes the interests of children. She too believes in the congressional finding of marriage.

While working in the federal government, Joy decided to study law at the University of Maryland Law School. Per her previous case studies in family law, divorce contributes to an increase in dis-functional families; children being reared in single parent households; neglect, physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse; economic crisis—bad credit, foreclosure, bankruptcy, abortion and shattered dreams.

To promote healthy families, she served as a mediator for Howard County and Baltimore City Division for Juvenile Cases. She received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Maryland Law School, Certificate in Conflict Resolution. She served as Facilitator with Building Strong Families, Loving Couples, Loving Children Curriculum. She has a certificate in training to be a Court-Appointed Lawyers Representing Children in Cases Involving Child Custody or Child Access, once she sits for the bar exam. She is married and now the mother of four children.

Joy's core values, principles, beliefs, and convictions are intertwined with her family and her creator. Prior to dating, one criterion in a mate was to know that they shared core spiritual and family values. Therefore, many of her decisions are made after considering what's in the best interest of her family as a whole, including her career choice, educational pursuits, daily schedule, and friends.

In spite of Joy's challenges with trying to balance the needs of her family while working, attending school and serving in the community; she believes that counseling helped her to really look at her schedule and see what she could cut in order to be more effective. It seems like the more that she cuts from her schedule; other things still fill her daily schedule.

Joy was remarried in December 2006. This wedding was held at her church. She was able to enjoy an intimate reception at her home with family and friends. This wedding was conservative and the couple did not go into debt. Instead, many of the items needed for the wedding were donated.

One of Joy's dilemmas is improving her financial status while trying to complete necessary steps to advance her career, such as the financial and time investment required to sit for the bar exam, pursue a doctorate in ministry and maintain a balance budget. These hurdles may be answered with having enough money. The challenges in building a business, organization and/or changing careers require money and time.

Joy believes that universities should consider offering Dr. Harley's materials, especially in counseling programs. Since America has such a high divorce rate, she doesn't understand why a course specifically in marriage is not required. She believes that Dr. Harley's materials work and are able to transcend many cultures and religions.

She is grateful to have the opportunity to receive his counsel, study his materials, and know where to find solutions to her problems.

From all that Joy endured, she has become closer to God. Joy understands that God has been with her throughout her entire life. God has been a friend, a provider, guide, healer to name a few. During the first year of her second marriage, Joy became pregnant and had a miscarriage. She was overwhelmed at the thought of having another child while completing law school. The pregnancy came with a lot of complications. In the middle of the night, Joy went to the bathroom and noticed that she was bleeding heavily. Her husband, David, rushed her to the nearest hospital. The doctors stated that since she was in her first trimester, the pregnancy did not look good. Joy was taken to another room to have a sonogram. Before the sonogram began, Joy felt something coming out of her. Unfortunately, it appeared that she had released two tissues both the size of a palm of the hand.

Since Joy had never experienced a miscarriage, she was clueless of the pain that followed. God was able to bring her through the healing process. Joy recalls calling her contractor to tell them she would be unable to facilitate the couples training that evening. Joy enjoyed co-facilitating couples training but was unable to continue due to the schedule conflict with law school.

The following year, Joy's husband lost his mother to breast cancer. This was a difficult time because her husband was temporarily unable to travel. Six months after the passing of Joy's mother-in-law, Joy gave birth to a healthy baby girl. The birth was a month early and delayed Joy's law school graduation until the following year.

Joy and her husband experienced God's provision like never before. During one church service, a lady walked up to them to ask their name and wrote a check for \$1,000. Several times, family members and friends would bring cars loads of groceries and cooked food to her door. Since Joy was recovering from the birth of their daughter and her husband was temporarily unable to work, they were unable to pay all of their bills. Fortunately, the utility companies postponed payments until there was money available to pay the bills. It was a miracle that the utilities were not turned off once.

During this same period, both of their cars were reposed, including a manuscript for a book, *The ... After ...*. Both vehicles were Toyotas, and the company refused to return the personal items, which were worth just as much as the vehicles. The following year, she and her husband were able to purchase a mini-van and a SUV with cash.

During the same time, she was told by her doctor that abnormal cell growth was detected, that could be cancerous. Through prayer, fasting, faith in God, and support from church, the medical biopsy was benign.

In reflection of Joy's life and marriage, she began to consider what marriage examples were before her:

Example 1 (names have been changed to protect privacy of all examples):

Marriage Jill & John: Jill was a go-getter, spiritual, pack rat, nurturing and very benevolent and loving. John was also a go-getter, spiritual, timely, influenced by others. Jill and John loved their children and worked together on many projects. Their roles were well defined but John did not always give credit or respect to Jill's work. Jill began pastoring a church and John took over and later would not acknowledge Jill's role. This opened the door for others to come in the middle and assist with creating a strain in the

marriage. The withdrawals began and the relationship began to dwindle. John began publicly disrespecting Jill. This disrespect continued where church members also began disrespecting Jill. Jill eventually left the church and later returned. Jill stayed at the church until her death. When Jill died, John sold their joint assets and donated all to the church. The church used the money to move into a new building. Some of the church members appeared anxious for John to die so that they could be next in line to lead the church. While John and Jill fellowshiped with other churches, they did not directly align with any organization. Therefore, there was no structured peer review for challenges faced by John and Jill. John desired for his family to work with him in his ministry but lacked the ability to see that the disconnect in his own marriage to Jill directly impacted his children. Although his children love him, most have been unwilling to participate in a dysfunctional environment. Further, the eldest daughter was the only one who is still married to her first husband. The other first marriages ended through divorce or death.

Example 2 Marriage: Mary and Marcus were Jill's parents. They loved each other and had fourteen children together. Marcus was a minister, civic leader, and landowner. Before the birth of their last child, Marcus life was taken. He was a minority in the south. Afterwards, Marcus brother, Matt, unlawfully took the land from Mary. Matt lacked integrity and tried to have a relationship with both Mary and his wife Martha. Mary then moved her family to another state in an urban environment. The researcher observed that except for the eldest daughter, who was grown when Marcus passed, the other children struggled to mirror a healthy marriage when they did not see a continuous example followed.

Example 3 Marriage: Tom and Tina were John's parents. Tom and Tina were also from the south and attended a Baptist church. Tom was a deacon and sold liquor when it was not allowed by law. Tom's biggest customers were the deacons from his church. Tom's excessive drinking began a downward spiral of abuse to his wife, Tina. Although Tina loved him and had eight children, she left Tom and moved her family to another state in an urban city. John was drafted into war and moved to another state, where he later met and married Jill. The remainder of his siblings stayed in the urban city. Unfortunately, John and all of his brothers had prostate cancer. Although John was faithful to Jill, the other brothers were unfaithful to their wives.

Example 4 Marriage: Bill and Betsy; John and Jill's, son and daughter-in-law. Bill was a hard worker, loved God, and had bad credit because of being a guarantee for other family members. When Bill and Betsy got married and went to purchase a home. The mortgage company would only approve the loan, if Bill's name were omitted. Bill and Betsy paid the note on time but it was very stressful requiring both to work long hours and take career training to advance their financial position. One way Betsy would compensate for the stress was to desire great sex from Bill. The only challenge was Bill and Betsy had to learn to be sexually compatible. One came to the marriage as a virgin and the other had a few prior experiences. Their sex life was strained and the experienced partner was not patient with the inexperience partner. Instead of relief, Betsy became pregnant adding further stress to the financially strained marriage.

When Betsy gave birth to Bob, she was in school, working full-time at home and nursing Bob for the first year of his life. Betsy and Bill were under tremendous stress. They appeared to have it together; a beautiful home, diamond rings, child, dual income,

but Bill wanted relief. Instead of working together, Bill took on more work. He began taking on any side job to make money. Unfortunately, the marriage took its toll and Bill asked Betsy for a divorce. Betsy was devastated. She began seeking outside marriage counselors because she did not see any example around her that she wanted to follow. Betsy found help but Bill did not want counseling. After trying for a year, Betsy and Bill separated. Since Betsy had just completed school, she was able to get a new job that brought in \$20,000 more and put Bob in childcare. After one year of separation, Betsy decided to file for divorce. Once the divorce was filed, Betsy became friends with a man. At the time, she did not realize that sharing details with her male friend was being unfaithful to Bill. When the divorce was finalized, Betsy's friendship also ended.

Betsy and ex-husband Bill began a friendship. Bill, absent from Bob for two years, began spending time with him on a weekly basis. Betsy and Bill celebrated Bob's birthday on a Disney cruise. Afterwards Bill became Betsy's right hand and stayed with Bob overnight while Betsy traveled for work. The friendship did not lead to reconciliation and Betsy kept her promise to God and was not sexually involved with Bill again.

Betsy shared with Bill her desire to remarry. Bill still healing from the marriage was not ready to make a commitment. After a year of friendship, Betsy began dating someone else. After one month of dating, she was engaged. Six months later, Betsy married Jim.

Betsy and Jim both decided to go to school. Betsy had saved up some funds and her job became very stressful. She was trying to work closer to school but her

management did not agree. She then began working part-time while going to school. Jim was commuting out of state three times a week for school.

After Jim completed his certification, Betsy became pregnant. The financial strain of Jim and Betsy not working began taking a toll on their marriage. Jim and Betsy began having arguments over money. Jim found work but the money was not enough to support his family.

Jim began making changes to show his commitment to his family. Betsy and Jim joined a church that was strong on marriage to help them with the recovery process of rebuilding trust. In spite of life's tough challenges, Betsy went away to a Christian resort by herself to pray and seek God for her life. She believes that one important part of her emotional healing was to forgive everyone who had hurt her. Betsy was able to forgive her husband and asked for his forgiveness. These couples were apart of Joy's life and her choice to bring wholeness to herself and that it overflows into the lives of others.

She and her husband co-founded, Divine Fellowship Ministries. Their vision scripture is wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her (Prv 4:7-8, KJV). The mission statement is, "Building couples, families, businesses and communities to fulfill their purpose on earth." The ministry was created to teach people to fulfill their purpose in life:

- a. Train and encourage people to pray and search within themselves for their purpose in life.
- b. Develop and empower people to have financial freedom and physical well being for themselves and their families.
- c. Teach and cultivate the spirit of togetherness for a successful family life in unity.

- d. Teach and coach on peaceful marital relationship and a happy family.
- e. Develop and train people to build strong socio-economic and multiple streams of income as a foundation to face challenges.
- f. Educate and enlighten people to reach out to their communities, help their families as law-abiding citizens.
- g. Teach people to continuously develop themselves in knowledge and grow to keep abreast with the technology of today.
- h. Train children to study the word of God and wisdom.
- i. Train and develop our staff to serve with excellence.
- j. Others, as needed.

This ministry assists with referring couples to counselors, chefs, sex therapist, masseuses, fitness trainers, and beauty consultants to help couples to meet the following needs:

- a. Education on the value of marriage, relationship skills, and budgeting.
- b. Marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs that may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job and career advancement.
- c. Pre-marital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples and for couples or persons interested in marriage.
- d. Marriage enhancement and marriage skills training programs for married couples.
- e. Divorce reduction programs that teach relationship skills.
- f. Marriage mentoring programs that use married couples as role models and mentors.

Joy's entrepreneurial pursuits have shown her how law affects every aspect of business transactions. Her international travels to Africa, Barbados, and Bahamas have enhanced her appreciation of the United States government. Although a country may be

rich in natural resources without proper laws enacted and enforced the communities may remain in poverty.

Joy is also a partner with Spirit of Faith Christian Center, Drs. Mike and DeeDee Freeman, which is in the same community where she does outreach. She decided that formal training in the religious sector would further assist in the vision of Divine Fellowship Ministries. Joy first began a Master of Science in Pastoral Counseling at Loyola College in Maryland. During her second semester, her high school friend told her about United Theological Seminary (UTS). To her surprise, she was accepted into the doctoral program within the same semester. Joy believes that the doctoral program is more in line with her vision. She further believes that UTS will support the overall vision.

Within one month of Joy starting UTS, she experienced the sudden death of her brother, David, which brought about an urgency to move forward in ministry. She understands that life is not promised to anyone and that only what you do for Christ will be counted in the end. The death of her brother brought about questions regarding why God would allow her brother to transition at the young age of forty-two. Joy's peace in her brother's passing is that he had a very close relationship with God. She was comforting in seeing all of the people who came to support her family.

Shortly after losing her brother, Joy believes that her mother died of a broken heart, losing her son. She did not sleep much after his death. Having the family circle broken twice, within months, was very devastating. Joy knew that she needed to stay strong in her faith to break this cycle from happening to her. The financial impact of losing loved ones, being in the hospital, and giving birth required much faith in God. Joy is grateful that she made it through 2010 with her nuclear family intact.

Joy admits that when she was at a very low point and ready to give up that God's grace and prayer gave her the ability to hold on. In January 2011, she partnered with Jentezen Franklin's 21 Day Fast and subsequently learned that World Changers was also fasting. She became a partner at Spirit of Faith with Drs. Mike and DeeDee Freeman in Maryland and restarted UTS Program as a Kenneth Copeland Scholar.

She declared that 2011 was the year of no more loss. She is very excited to be a Kenneth Copeland Scholar and be mentored by a world-wide, faith, word base, family friendly, first-class ministry, and elated to participate in the weekly intercessory prayer with her peers.

During February 2011, Joy received a job offer to return to the federal government. She enjoys referring books, website information, etc. to others. It does not matter what their status is.

Joy has been impacted by many dynamic ministries with the help of Trinity Broadcast Network, over the past thirty years. In 2005, Joy attended a partners' conference with Dr. Creflo and Taffi Dollar at World Changers and was given a tour of their facilities. These experiences have given her a broader vision of what God will do when one follows Jesus Christ and walk by faith. Joy listens to Dr. Dollar speak of the positive impact that partnering with Kenneth and Gloria Copeland has had on his life. She enjoys watching the daily television broadcasts of credible, word based ministries.

Joy strives to have daily devotion of prayer, singing, and reading the Bible. Her spiritual journey has expanded with the teaching she receives weekly from SOFCC. She enjoys watching Dr. Creflo Dollar from World Changes on Trinity Broadcasting Network, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland and associated ministries, Bishop T. D. Jakes,

Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn, Jentezen Franklin, Joyce Meyers, and Jessie Duplantis. Joy really appreciates the weekly word received from her pastors’.

Two of Joy’s favorite passages of scriptures are Psalm 61 and Isaiah 60. Joy believes that the Holy Spirit leads and guides her through life’s daily journey. Joy adheres to the scripture, “My people perish for lack of knowledge.” Therefore, she strives to get as much information as possible to make informed decisions. She believes that one of the goals in marriage is first getting good information. The second goal is implementing the knowledge that is obtained. The third goal and most important is asking God to help with His love that covers a multitude of sins, forgiveness, hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit.

Joy also acknowledges that parenting has its challenges at each stage of a child’s growth. She loves her children and understands that the needs change over time. She appreciates passing through the infant stage when the feedings are every two hours. She is now raising a teenager where she is trying to stir him in the right direction through love and discipline.

Joy enjoys her children and acknowledges that being a parent is not a small task. In her view, often the things that are most rewarding require great effort. She believes that studying God’s word, prayer, praise, and daily declaration help in making it through the life’s challenges.

One of Joy’s goals is to see the divorce rate decrease in half, between a man and a woman, in America during her lifetime. She believes that this will be accomplished through education, incentives at the governmental level, such as premarital preparation and a deeper conviction to have God’s guidance in choosing a compatible life partner.

She believes that the youth, young adults, and young at hearts will benefit from obtaining wholeness through a weekly learning curriculum.

In 2008, Joy had a dream that she was operating an institution that had several young people going to class and studying. The institution was multi-level, and with elevators, marble floors and flush carpet. The inside had a sunroom with a flowing spring. Outside were large blue/gray homes with some space between them. Joy recalls being in the presidential suite with people gathered around. The atmosphere was very sobering. In the dream, she saw an elder of the church who serves on the bereavement committee. Immediately after the dream, she awoken and was troubled asking where was “David.” Unfortunately, a year after this dream, her brother, David suddenly passed away. The same elder greatly assisted her family with the home going service.

Joy did not get to know how very important this elder’s role would be in helping her family with a smooth home going service. The elder walked in such wisdom, understanding, patience, and knowledge. She is grateful to know that her church has such competent people serving in ministry.

Within a few weeks of Joy’s brother home going service, her mother had a brain stroke. The doctors did not expect her mother to make it pass forty-eight hours. Joy believes that through much prayer her mother, stayed alive until all of her children and siblings were able to say farewell. Joy’s Mom went to heaven a few days after Joy gave birth to another healthy baby girl.

Joy recalls her mother often sharing her vision to begin a “prayer camp.” On Joy’s mother hospital bed, the prayer camp began. People from around the country and internationally were praying for her mother’s recovery. Joy recognizes that God is a

healer and has the final say about her mother's life. Joy is very thankful for so many people reaching out to her and her family with prayer and support.

Joy understands that God gives her dreams and enables her to intercede in prayer. She sees things in the future through her dreams. Joy and her husband have a prayer assignment to pray for leaders, their families, and their ministry assignments. She enjoys learning God's revelation knowledge through the Bible.

Quite often, Joy shares with other couples knowledge that she has received and still working through in her own relationship. She notices that these couples are very interested in the materials that she has studied. Joy enjoys encouraging others, which also encourages her. She observes that with most victories there is also a spiritual/natural battle. Joy has a greater understanding of the scripture that she does not wrestle against flesh and blood but principalities. Joy understands that prayer, faith, and corresponding action are the keys to her success.

Joy understands that many people were important in helping her to achieve success. She believes that the many administrators, educators, and peers at Morgan State University, University of Maryland Law School, Loyola University of Maryland, and now United Theological Seminary were instrumental in her achievements. Joy appreciates the many people who positively impacted her life, her parents, family, pastors, TBN, civic leaders, educators and mentors, to name a few. Through her travels, she meets people from every walk of life. Joy enjoyed wisdom from a prominent business owner, who encouraged her to pursue a law degree and take time in choosing a life partner.

Joy is very thankful for the quality friends she has met through the years. One friend that graduated from the same high school and college told Joy about a position working for the federal government. Joy invited her friend to church and the friend and her family rededicated their lives to Christ. Joy later joined a Baptist church where her friend also attended.

Her friends have been very supportive through the good and the bad times. When Joy was given birth to her first daughter, the same friend was a few doors down, in the same hospital, recovering from the birth of her son. Her friend's family watched Joy's son until her dad picked him up from the hospital. The amazing timing was that Joy and her friend were scheduled to have their baby weeks apart. In reality, their baby was born two days apart.

Joy believes that life skills are more than what the traditional church has previously embraced it should involve both religious and secular knowledge. Curriculums should include Rich Dad, Poor Dad, Healthy Living/Eating Habits, knowledge about debt and stress, relationship, career guidance to name a few. Joy and her husband did weekly community outreach by partnering with organizations that provide donations to shelters.

Prior to partnering with SOFCC, there was little discussion for married people in church to embrace intimacy. The message was to abstain from sex before marriage and to avoid adultery but more discussions were needed to keep the marriage relationship healthy. The church has been a lighthouse for many of life's problems. Joy is happy that at Spirit of Faith many of these issues are weekly addressed in there is a strong focus on

marriage ministry as well as other ministries needed for the body of Christ to excel in every area of their lives.

Joy sees the importance of using the media, Internet as a major connection to a cost effective approach for reaching many people. The electronic media is growing fast for many institutions to reach people who may not have time or willing to come to a physical location due to various reasons. The media is a great fit for the church, Bible institutes, youth ministries, singles ministries, and marriage ministries.

Completing the United Theological Seminary doctoral program, with multiple mentors, helped Joy in ministry to serve in excellence, partner with ministers, leaders, and laypersons in the body of Christ and reach more people by utilizing the media and Internet.

Joy understands that her life experiences have helped to shape who she is as a person and who she has become in ministry. Joy humbly accepts the call of God on her life. She understands that her success is based on her relationship with God.

Joy is striving to develop more and become all that God has envisioned for her life. Her testimony is God's help in her daily living. She recognizes that life brings about tough choices. Her faith has been increased during her life experiences. Her first ministry is working with her family to be healthy—spiritually, physically, emotionally and financially. She sees that many of her personal struggles in being a good wife and mother is what God uses to help her in ministry with others who may have or will have some of the same challenges.

Joy's fundamental belief is that Jesus Christ died for her sins. Joy does not try to impose her beliefs on others. She tries to embrace positive messages for her daily

choices. She believes that life is a learning experience and that she is never too old to learn something new. Joy seeks to grow closer to God and believes that it is important to always make time for daily devotion.

According to the Myers Briggs assessment, Joy is an extravert. She enjoys being around others but also understands that it is important to be quiet at times to hear from God. She enjoys networking with others and listening to their stories.

Joy recognizes that her attraction at times is the opposite of herself, for example her husband is an introvert. This difference helps to bring balance in their marriage but also causes some challenges when she wants a quick answer. She believes that life offers a sense of humor. The very things that may attract a person may at later times be a challenge.

In the beginning of 2011, Joy Sam partnered with Jenetezen Franklin's 21 day fast, partnered with Spirit of Faith Christian Center, SOFCC, under the direction of Drs. Mike and DeeDee Freeman in Maryland, restarted United Theological Seminary (UTS) Program as a Kenneth Copeland Scholar, and rejoined the federal government, Department of Health and Human Services, DHHS, with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for the Electronic Submission of Medical Documents (esMD), as a Contract Officer Representative for an IT Contractor. She believes that her program focus to provide electronic resources to family's world-wide is a major initiative that requires her interest and calling to intersect with church, school, and government. Joy knows that God's hand on her life is the reason for the synergy that she will explore further in this paper.

Joy understands that her first ministry, working with her family to be healthy; spiritually, physically, emotionally, financially and socially, will overflow into the lives of others. Joy knows that the collaborative effort with church, school, and government is necessary to address the monumental issues that families face worldwide. She is so grateful that she obeyed God in making the connection with church, school, and work.

She is very excited to be a student at UTS and be mentored by world-wide, faith, word base, family friendly, first-class ministries, and elated to participate in weekly intercessory prayer with her peers and Bible studies with SOFCC. Joy's work at CMS with esMD, she strives to balance her career, family needs, SOFCC partnership and UTS doctoral program.

She was not exempt from the impact of American statistics showing that even the church is not exempt from 50% of marriages ending in divorce. God bought her through this devastating experience, failure of her first marriage and has given her the opportunity to grow in her current marriage and share with others her journey. She and her husband are the co-founders of Divine Fellowship Ministries, DFM. Joy is the mother of four healthy children. She is a Certified Public Accountant, Mediator in the Maryland Circuit Court and has a Juris Doctor in law and a Certificate in Conflict Resolution.

DFM was created to help people fulfill their purpose in life, by referring couples that may want relationship and life skills such as parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and career advancement. DFM also partners with organizations to provide food and clothing in the community. Joy is an advocate for obtaining great resources to guide families through the daily decisions of life. This outreach was birth out of her own need to ensure that her family is healthy and overflows into the lives of others.

She diligently seeks out resources through books, CDs, DVDs, Internet, television, conferences, church attendance, work, school, partnerships, word of mouth, etc.

As a partner with SOFCC, Joy believes and recites weekly both the SOFCC

Mission Statement and Faith Confession below:

SOFCC Mission Statement

We are a supernatural church, composed of supernatural people, doing supernatural things in a 5 star manner. We are workers together with Christ. Building and discipling people of purpose, power, praise, and faith through fellowship. WE ARE A LIFE SHAPING, WORLD CHANGING TRANSFORMATIONAL MACHINE building strong families and their finances, while reaching out to the unsaved, the untaught, and the unchurched. We are receiving an abundance of miracles, an abundance of wealth, and an abundance of souls. In Jesus' name. Amen!"

SOFCC Faith Confession

CONFESSION OF FAVOUR

Father, in the Name of Jesus, thank you for declaring this year as "The Year Of FAVOUR!!" I have received from my man of God the declaration that you have given to him. Therefore, I am entitled to covenant FAVOUR, covenant kindness, excessive kindness, preferential treatment, and unfair partiality. Because I am the righteousness of God, FAVOUR surrounds me like a shield everywhere I go and in everything I do. I expect FAVOUR to be in full manifestation every day of my life! It is undeniable, unexplainable, uncontainable, unstoppable FAVOUR; which will produce great victories, supernatural recognition, overwhelming peace, and divine increase!

Thank you Father that you have favoured me, I am your favorite. That's why all the conditions of my life turn into favourable ones. I can't lose for winning, winning is what I do all the days of my life! Look out circumstances! Look out situations! FAVOUR is moving like a freight train; removing pain, stain, stress, and strain. I believe it, I receive it, and it's mine In Jesus' name!

Joy's family has benefited greatly from their SOFCC partnership and weekly attendance. She observes that her daughters often ask to go to "Children's Church." Her son was baptized and her youngest daughter was dedicated. She and

her husband attend the communication lab and are grateful for the marriage counseling received from Dr. Mike and DeeDee Freeman, associated pastors and ministers. SOFCC is an excellent ministry to the whole person. They have outreach in the community, Bible institute, firm foundation school and summer camp for youth, outstanding teen conference, Marriage Made Easy (now going across the country), aviation ministry and multiple locations, to name just a few.

Many dynamic ministries with the help of Trinity Broadcast Network have impacted Joy, over the past thirty years. In 2005, Joy attended a partners' conference with Dr. Creflo and Taffi Dollar at World Changers and was given a tour of their facilities. These experiences have given her a broader vision of what God will do when one follows Jesus Christ and walk by faith. Joy listens to Dr. Dollar speak of the positive impact that partnering with Kenneth and Gloria Copeland has had on his life. She also enjoys watching the daily television broadcasts and reading materials of credible, word based ministries, such as Dr. Mike and Dee Dee Freeman, Dr. Creflo and Taffi Dollar, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Dr. Steve and Kelly Swisher and associated ministries, Joel Osteen, Bishop T.D. Jakes, Benny Hinn, Joyce Meyer, Jessie Duplantis and Jentezen Franklin.

Joy is the daughter of Reverend Izell and the late Reverend Elaine Crump. She is the youngest of seven siblings. Her parents inspired her, serving as pastors, entrepreneurs and philanthropist in the local and international community. She started her international traveling at the tender age of two months. She enjoys traveling, singing and working with others.

In 2010, a month into the United Theological Seminary (UTS) doctoral program, Joy's brother passed away at forty-two years of age. A few months later, Joy's mom passed away on May 7, 2010 during the same time, Joy was recovering from given birth to a baby girl on May 4, 2010. She is thankful for so many people who supported her with prayers locally, nationally, and internationally, including her new UTS family—faculty, staff and fellow students.

Joy knows that God's grace helped her to cope with the sudden loss of her mother and brother. She pressed through the challenges experienced in her family and extended family, including false accusations, financial hardships, grief, terminal illness, etc. She knows that prayer, faith, Bible study, and corresponding actions through the name of Jesus will destroy every strong hold. She also understands that it is important to walk in love and war against contrary spirits. Joy believes that the Holy Spirit leads and guides her to triumph over every fiery trial. Her strong foundation is studying God's word, praise, and worship.

Enrolling in the United Theological Seminary doctoral program as a Kenneth Copeland Scholar, under the direction of Dr. Harold Hudson and Dr. Steve Swisher, has helped Joy in ministry to serve in excellence, partner with ministers, leaders and laypersons in the body of Christ and reach more people by utilizing the media and internet.

Joy, as co-founder of Divine Fellowship Ministries, has benefited from electronic media that is enabling many to become increasingly more productive with existing resources. Technological advancements are also creating greater challenges for individuals, organizations, and government. These dynamic developments are constantly

changing and there are good and bad results, such as greater exposure to helpful resources (family friendly development for education, finance, social, health and spiritual), bad resources (pornography, violence, infidelity, witchcraft), and a need to protect privacy and safeguard identity, reputation, physical, and intellectual assets.

The need for life skills has increased on all fronts. The impact that electronic media has on industries require organizations to change the way they do business and services and the need to expand through collaborative partnerships with sole proprietors, licensed consultants, mediators, ministries, companies and public services. DFM strengths are establishing a solid reputation in the community; partnering with highly experienced staff with a willingness to see people lives changed for the better; maintaining high partner retention; providing consistent referrals to individuals, families and organizations; establishing state-of-the-art computer systems, utilizing the latest software that continues to enhance productivity and expand capacity.

The integration of Joy's Spiritual Autobiography and Context Analysis has created a dynamic Synergy for her interest in families and her UTS program focus to create electronic resources for families. Now is the appointed time for her to go forth and do what she has been created for. Joy will explore expanded options through discussions with UTS faculty, persons in her context of ministry, doctoral program peers, and other colleagues in ministry. She will continue her education through ventures, books, and other media resources.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

Marriage Made [MM] EZ In 31 Days by Dr. Michael A. Freeman is an excellent how to guide for couples that provides practical steps, tools, insight and direction on corrective actions to enable a marriage that may be barely surviving to a thriving, whole marriage in thirty-one days. This book addresses the purpose of marriage, vision, responsibility, communication, unity, friendship, sex (his/her needs), priorities, prayer, health, finance, love, commitment and much more. The scripture references, exercise, and confession are realistic, reasonable, and attainable. This is a very valuable resource for every couple and easy read.

The researcher used this model for her field experience. The small financial investment for a couple to purchase two books for immediate implementation can assist in yielding a fulfilling marriage. Even if only one spouse is willing to take the initial steps to growing in maturity and applying the steps, the willing spouse may assist in becoming the first change agent that creates a catalyst for the initial unwilling spouse to reconsider his/her position. In addition to the book on MMEZ, “Dr. Freeman and his wife, host MMEZ tours, visit their website at: www.MarriageMadeEZ.com for more information on outreach and their monthly magazine to provide golden relationship nuggets.” A message from Dr. Mike & DeeDee Freeman posted and access on October 27, 2013:

It is our sole intention to use our tour throughout the US and this website as a vehicle of God's purpose to improve marriages globally. We believe that marriage is a covenant partnership that is designed to last forever. In today's society, marriage is seriously at risk and we have declared war on divorce. So, we are helping couples across the world define, understand, and soar in marriage through the Marriage Made EZ ministry, using God's Word to pass on a legacy of commitment and mentorship for generations to come. It is our desire that marriages are strong, families are united, and couples are walking in the divine wisdom of God concerning marriage. This ministry is for couples who are intending to be married, married, separated or recently divorced. This ministry transcends denominational barriers and we fully expect it to bring restoration to the institution of marriage and show the world what God intended it to be - a real life example of the relationship between Christ and the Church.”

During the Researcher’s visit to the MMEZ website, she registered herself for the “Million Marriage Campaign” and then clicked on the questions posted from September 6th 2013, “if money were no object, I’ll give you:” The researcher called her spouse to exchange replies. Much to her surprise, she realized that his/her response quality time and respect do not require money and can be immediately implemented in their marriage consistently.

So What! I'm Still God's Glamorous Girl– June 14, 2010 by DeeDee Freeman
 “Do you feel that you can't recover from past hurts, pain caused by others, or the bad decisions you have made? Bad decisions and bad choices can cause you to feel defeated and unworthy of the promises of God, but his promises are "yes" and "amen." We live in a world of judgment and self-hatred, but that shouldn't dictate how we live our lives. Now is the time for the children of the Most High God to rise up and be all that he has created them to be.

In *So What! I'm Still God's Glamorous Girl*, Dr. Deloris R. Freeman, affectionately known as Dr. DeeDee, openly and candidly talks about her life. She shares the testimonies of others who have learned that life goes on in spite of the fact that they may have been hurt or have made some bad decisions. Her teachings inspire and challenge women to develop a strong relationship with God and with their families. Regardless of what has gone on in your past, the best is yet to come. You did what? Who did what to you? So what! You are still God's Glamorous Girl.¹

¹“Still God’s Glamorous Girl,” accessed 10/27/2013 http://www.amazon.com/What-Still-Gods-Glamorous-Girl/dp/1426934149/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382932635&sr=1-1&keywords=deloris+freeman.

The researched attended Marriage Builders with Dr. Willard and Joyce Harley. Dr. Harley contends that often men and women tend to try to meet needs that they value. Since their needs are often very different, they waste effort trying to meet the wrong needs.² Dr. Harley provides several resources to couples on this websites.

Dr. Harley states, “That the right needs in marriage are so strong that when they are not met in marriage, people are tempted to go outside of marriage to satisfy them. Aside from the risks of extra marital affair(s), important emotional needs should be met for the sake of care itself. Marriage is a very special relationship. Promises are made to allow a spouse the exclusive right to meet some of these important needs. When needs are unmet, a spouse is faced with few ethical alternatives.”

Dr. Harley describes ten emotional needs of men and women. “They are sex, affection, attractive spouse, conversation, honesty and openness, domestic support, family commitment, recreational companionship, financial support, and affirmation.” According to Dr. Harley, “If spouses continue to meet each other's needs the way they do when they date (and fall in love), those fireworks just keep on firing. And when they are in love, meeting each other's needs is as effortless as it was when they were dating. The monotony arises when the demands of careers and children compete for a couple's attention. Sometimes the temptation is to succumb to these competing interests. Instead of meeting each other's emotional needs, the trap is to meet the needs of our children, extended family, or work.”

Dr. Harley states, “Good marriages are not hard work.... Its bad marriages that are hard work. Good marriages become bad marriages when mistakes are made that ruin the romantic love spouses once had for each other. These mistakes fall into two categories:

²Marriage Builders, accessed October 27, 2013, www.marriagebuilders.com.

1) Failing to meet each other's emotional needs or 2) making each other unhappy (love busters).” He covers the mistakes of the first type in his book *His Needs, Her Needs*, and mistakes of the second type in *Love Busters*. “Either type of the above mistakes can destroy romantic love, and it's always much harder to be married to someone where love is no longer there.”

Intended for Pleasure: Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage, Ed Wheat, MD and Gaye Wheat, “A classic for thirty years, *Intended for pleasure* is an easy-to-read reference book that combines biblical teaching on love and marriage with the latest medical information on sex and sexuality. This popular resource gently encourages married couples to make their sexual relationship the fulfilling experience it was meant to be. This is a complete sex manual, with basic facts, illustrations, and frank discussion of all facets of human sexuality. A perfect gift for newlyweds and a source book for pastors and marriage counselors, this book has helped more than a million people understand and enjoy the gift God intended for pleasure.”³

Dr. Creflo Dollar, “What kind of mark do you want to make on your family? What makes a successful family? Is it a nice home in an upscale neighborhood? Or is it a job that pays well and propels you to a higher standard of living? While those are all components of a successful lifestyle, they are not indicators of a successful family life. *The Successful Family: Everything You Need to Know to Build a Stronger Family* by Dr. Creflo A. Dollar and Taffi L. Dollar is the authoritative guide on the family in print today. It takes the most common problems facing families and provides them with sound,

³Intended for Pleasure, accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Intended-Pleasure-Technique-Fulfillment-Christian/dp/0800719379/ref=la_B001KHQKWE_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1383341610&sr=1-1.

practical solutions and proven principles for success. Readers will learn: How to make the most of the single life, The basic needs of men and women, Simple strategies for money management, How to divorce-proof a marriage and intensify emotional and sexual intimacy, The value of humor and adaptability, How to overcome the damaging effects of abuse, addiction and suicide, ...and much more! With practical exercises, personal accounts and a solid, biblical foundation, *The Successful Family* is a must-have for every home.”⁴

The Holy Spirit, Your Financial Advisor, has a chapter called “Choosing the Right Mate” provides steps regarding first seeking wholeness, seeking God, not being unequally yoked, respecting your parent’s judgment, collecting data via a questionnaire, life application.” Dr. Dollar has several books and resources on marriage and family.

Kenneth Copeland author of *The Blessing* of the Lord is God’s original plan for you. “Contrary to popular belief, He doesn’t want you sick, broke and lonely. He wants to make you rich in every area of life your health, finances, relationships and more. In this... book, you will learn: God’s original intent for His people to live in The Blessing, God’s plan to restore The Blessing after man sinned, How God has empowered you to succeed, How Jesus connects us to The Blessing, Why The Blessing is not just a spiritual reality, but a material reality, too, How to be living proof of The Blessing to others, and How love governs the operation of The Blessing.”⁵

Building Relationships That Last: Your 10-Day Spiritual Action Plan by Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, says, “As Christians, our relationships should be rich and

⁴*Successful Family: Everything Build Stronger*, accessed October 27, 2013, <http://www.amazon.com/Successful-Family-Everything-Build-Stronger/dp/1590894685/ref>.

⁵*The Blessing*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/The-Blessing-Lord-Makes-Sorrow/dp/1604631147/ref=pd_sim_b_14.

rewarding the kind of godly connections that spur us on to great things in the Lord! When we unite together in love, forgiveness, faith, and singleness of heart, nothing can stand against us. Whether you need broken relationships repaired or just need to strengthen the ones you have, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland have a lifesaving message for you. In this interactive book, you will find an in-depth, 10-Day Spiritual Action Plan designed to help you think scripturally about all the relationships in your life from your marriage and family to your church and workplace connections. From day one, you will saturate your life with the Word of God, using the enclosed tools, including: scriptures to stand on every day and interactive, devotional questions designed to help you take action and apply what you have learned.”⁶

Healing & Wellness: Your 10-Day Spiritual Action Plan by – Kenneth and Gloria Copeland say, “By following this simple and practical Spiritual Action Plan, in 10 days, you'll completely renew your mind to what God says about your finances, so you can stand in faith and believe for the breakthrough you need.”⁷

Bishop T. D. Jakes says, “Forgiveness is a big idea and it works best when it is invested into people who have the courage to grasp the seven-foot-high idea of what’s best for their future rather than the four-foot-high idea of recompense for what has happened in their past,” Jakes writes in *Let It Go*. This book explores forgiveness as an idea and at the same time offers specific and clear actions for readers who seek to apply

⁶Building Relationships That Last, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Building-Relationships-That-Last-Spiritual/dp/1606833944/ref=sr_1_sc_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382932039&sr=1-2-spell&keywords=keneth+copeland+relationship, accessed 10/27/2013.

⁷Spiritual Complete Financial Breakthroughm accessed October 27m 2013, [http:// www.amazon.com/10-day-Spiritual-Complete-Financial-Breakthrough/dp/1575629909/ref=pd_sim_b_1](http://www.amazon.com/10-day-Spiritual-Complete-Financial-Breakthrough/dp/1575629909/ref=pd_sim_b_1).

the idea in their daily lives. Offenses are a part of life, he says. But conflicts can be resolved and relationships do have a future, if we learn how to forgive. No matter how great or small the injustice, Jakes shows how the matter can be put behind you for the sake of a better tomorrow if you can *Let It Go*.⁸

Jakes says, “Several years ago I was invited as a guest on *Oprah* to talk about sexual abuse. When I suggested that it is important that we move beyond just saying how bad the molester was to have committed such atrocious acts, to the larger (from my viewpoint) idea of showing the perpetrator how he can be forgiven and rehabilitated, people went wild. Some of the guests were far too angry to think beyond the height of the atrocities they had experienced. They used their anger like familiar blankets to warm them as a comfort from their trauma, never realizing how they were smothering their own futures. They couldn’t imagine that future perpetrators will never come forward as long as they believe they have no chance at forgiveness and rehabilitation. The women who told their stories that day on the show had every justifiable reason to hate and be angry, the reality is the poison of unquenched anger doesn’t infect the perpetrator but only incarcerates the victim. Unforgiveness denies the victim the possibility of parole and leaves them stuck in the prison of what was, incarcerating them in their trauma and relinquishing the chance to escape beyond the pain.”⁹

Before You Do, by Bishop T.D. Jakes turns his attention from repositioning yourself for a life without limits to cultivating relationships in the best way possible with the most important people in your life: parents, children, spouses and others who are your

⁸*Let It Go*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Let-It-Go-Forgive-Forgiven/dp/B00D1G8G2Y/ref=pd_sim_b_14.

⁹Ibid.

most beloved and in need of your support. As one of America's most trusted advisors, counselors, and pastors, Jakes teaches us what to do before we: propose marriage; consider divorce; send our children off to school; put our elders into assisted living situations or other treatment facilities, and so many more major steps each of us are faced with taking at some point in life. He uses the lessons he has learned from his own marriage and family life as well as others to encourage and inspire people to give and receive the greatest love possible.”¹⁰

The Five Love Languages, “Marriage should be based on love, right? But does it seem as though you and your spouse are speaking two different languages? *New York Times* bestselling author Dr. Gary Chapman guides couples in identifying, understanding, and speaking their spouse’s primary love language—quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, or physical touch. By learning the five love languages, you and your spouse will discover your unique love languages and learn practical steps in truly loving each other. Chapters are categorized by love language for easy reference, and each one ends with specific, simple steps to express a specific language to your spouse and guide your marriage in the right direction. A newly designed love languages assessment will help you understand and strengthen your relationship. You can build a lasting, loving marriage together.”¹¹

Gary Chapman hosts a nationally syndicated daily radio program called *A Love Language Minute* that can be heard on more than 150 radio stations as well as the weekly

¹⁰*Before You Do*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Before-You-Do-Making-Decisions/dp/1416547282/ref=pd_sim_b_15.

¹¹*The Five Love Languages*, http://www.amazon.com/Love-Languages-Secret-That-Lasts/dp/0802473156/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382923912&sr=1-1.

syndicated program *Building Relationships with Gary Chapman*, which can both be heard on fivelovelanguages.com.¹²

Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs

by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, A Simple Message,

A wife has one driving need—to feel loved. When that need is met, she is happy. A husband has one driving need—to feel respected. When that need is met, he is happy. When either of these needs isn't met, things get crazy. *Love and Respect* reveals why spouses react negatively to each other, and how they can deal with such conflict quickly, easily, and biblically.¹³

A Message That Works, based on over three decades of counseling, as well as scientific and biblical research, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs and his wife, Sarah, have already taken the *Love and Respect* message across America and are changing the way couples talk to, think about, and treat each other. What do you want for your marriage? Want some peace? Want to feel close? Want to feel valued? Want to experience marriage the way God intended? Then why not try some Love and Respect.¹⁴

“John Gottman has revolutionized the study of marriage by using rigorous scientific procedures to observe the habits of married couples in unprecedented detail over many years. Here is the culmination of his life's work: the seven principles that guide couples on the path toward a harmonious and long-lasting relationship. Packed with practical questionnaires and exercises, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage*

¹²Ibid.

¹³*Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Love-Respect-Desires-Desperately-Needs/dp/1591451876/ref=pd_sim_b_8.

¹⁴Ibid.

Work is the definitive guide for anyone who wants their relationship to attain its highest potential.”¹⁵

In 1988, Harville Hendrix in partnership with his wife, Helen LaKelly Hunt wrote, *Getting the Love You Want Workbook* this book is “designed for the hundreds of thousands of couples who have attended Imago workshops since *Getting the Love You Want* hit bookstands, as well as new and curious ones seeking a practical route back to intimacy and passionate friendship. The workbook contains a unique twelve-week course (The New Couples' Study Guide) designed to help work through the exercises published in Part III of *Getting the Love You Want*. Included are complete step-by-step instructions for transforming relationships into a lasting source of love and companionship.”¹⁶

“Learn when to say yes and when to say no—to your spouse and to others—to make the most of your marriage. Only when a husband and wife know and respect each other's needs, choices, and freedom can they give themselves freely and lovingly to one another. Boundaries are the 'property lines' that define and protect husbands and wives as individuals. Once they are in place, a good marriage can become better, and a less-than-satisfying one can even be saved. Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend, counselors and authors of the award-winning best seller *Boundaries*, show couples how to apply the ten laws of boundaries that can make a real difference in relationships. They help husbands and wives understand the friction points or serious hurts and betrayals in their marriage—and move beyond them to the mutual care, respect, affirmation, and intimacy they both long for. *Boundaries in Marriage* helps couples: 1) Set and maintain personal boundaries

¹⁵*The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Seven-Principles-Making-Marriage-Work/dp/0609805797/ref=pd_sim_b_35.

¹⁶*Getting the Love You Want*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Getting-Love-You-Want-Workbook/dp/0743483677/ref=pd_sim_b_41.

and respect those of their spouse; 2) Establish values that form a godly structure and architecture for their marriage; 3) Protect their marriage from different kinds of 'intruders; and 4) Work with a spouse who understands and values boundaries—or work with one who doesn't.”¹⁷

Marriage On The Rock: Couple's Discussion Guide by Jimmy Evans. “Society requires years of preparation for almost any significant career endeavor, but demands no real preparation for one of the most crucial undertakings in life: marriage. In an age of disposable marriage and information overload, where can couples turn for real answers that will make their relationships work? Only to God. *Marriage on the Rock* clearly details God's principles that will turn disillusioned, divorce-bound marriages into satisfying dream relationships. This discussion guide will show you: Why no human being can meet your deepest needs—only God can The secrets of a solid marriage The four foundational laws of marriage What the Bible says about the roles of husbands and wives How to understand and meet your spouse's needs The five essential skills for maximum sexual pleasures.”¹⁸

Healing Your Marriage When Trust Is Broken: Finding Forgiveness and Restoration Paperback by Cindy Beall, “A few days after an ordinary Valentine's Day, Cindy Beall's life changed forever. She listened with disbelief to her husband, Chris, a respected pastor; confess to pornography addiction, numerous affairs, and the startling news that a woman was pregnant with his child. With raw honesty and intimate

¹⁷*Boundaries in Marriages*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Boundaries-Marriage-Henry-Cloud/dp/0310243149/ref=pd_sim_b_97.

¹⁸*Marriage on the Rock: Couples Discussion Guide*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Marriage-Rock-Couples-Discussion-Guide/dp/1931585040/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382925808&sr=1-3&keywords=jimmy+evans+marriage+on+the+rock.

knowledge of pain and of God's power to resurrect something new out of the debris of betrayal, Cindy reveals how to:

- Seek guidance, counseling, and prayer support when deceptions surface
- Help the family heal from the grief and humiliation
- Rebuild trust after porn, sex, and other addictions undermine a relationship
- Protect a marriage from lies and unfaithfulness
- Rely on God to pursue forgiveness and move forward in new promises

Cindy's compassion, grasp of God's Word, and the Bealls' remarkable story will help wives and husbands trust God with their broken hearts and follow His leading, hope, and redemption.”¹⁹

“Unconditional love is eagerly promised at weddings, but rarely practiced in real life. As a result, romantic hopes are often replaced with disappointment in the home. But it doesn’t have to stay that way. *The Love Dare*, the *New York Times* No. 1 best seller that has sold five million copies and was major plot device in the popular movie *Fireproof*, is a forty-day challenge for husbands and wives to understand and practice unconditional love. Whether your marriage is hanging by a thread or healthy and strong, *The Love Dare* is a journey you need to take. It’s time to learn the keys to finding true intimacy and developing a dynamic marriage.”²⁰

¹⁹*Healing Your Marriage When Trust Is Broken: Finding Forgiveness and Restoration*, accessed October 27, 2014, http://www.amazon.com/Healing-Your-Marriage-Trust-Broken/dp/0736943153/ref=pd_sim_b_21.

²⁰*The Love Dare*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/The-Love-Dare-Alex-Kendrick/dp/1433679590/ref=pd_sim_b_85.

Stormie Omartian's bestselling books on prayer and marriage have touched millions of readers in a life-changing way. *The Power of Prayer to Change Your Marriage* helps husbands or wives pray to protect their relationship from fourteen serious problems that can lead to unsatisfying marriages or even divorce. For those who are already struggling in these areas, this book will help them find healing and restoration. Readers will learn how to pray about everything from: communication breakdown to struggles with finances and raising children misplaced priorities to anger, unforgiveness, and sexual frustration pornography and infidelity to depression and addictions. No stranger to struggles in her thirty-four years of marriage, Stormie looks at these topics and more in the straightforward, hopeful manner readers have come to trust. As always, readers will find Bible verses and personal prayers they can use as powerful resources to help their marriages last a lifetime.²¹

“How is a wife to love her husband? By learning three things, says Tony Evans: how to submit, seduce, and surrender to her husband. Out of these three principles a godly marriage will grow. In *For Married Women Only*, pastor and author Tony Evans explores these three principles in a straight forward yet encouraging manner. He unpacks the touchy topic of submission and lays out the rewards inherent in this biblical model. On seduction, Evans looks at the quality of attractiveness and how embodying it can be pleasing to your spouse and to God. And with surrender, readers will examine why a wife

²¹*The Power of Prayer to Change Your Marriage*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.Amazon.com/Power-Prayer-Change-Your-Marriage/dp/0736925155/ref=pd_sim_b_5.

is the perfect helpmate for her husband and how to combat attitudes opposed to God's design.²²

For Married Men Only: Three Principles for Loving Your Wife, by Tony Evans, “What does it mean for a husband to love his wife? Three things, says Tony Evans: a husband must be his wife's savior, sanctifier, and satisfier. It is by living out these three principles that a godly marriage will blossom and flourish.”²³ In *For Married Men Only*, each of these principles is explored and explained using real-life examples. How can a husband be his wife's savior? By learning to love her as Christ loved the church. What about sanctifier? By dying to self and modeling sacrificial love, no matter what the result. And satisfier? By studying and serving his wife so he can fulfill her needs, just as Christ humbled Himself for our sakes.”²⁴

In *Divorce and Remarriage*, Tony Evans says, “There are many views today on morality, relativity and right and wrong. Dr. Tony Evans refuses to let the voice of God be drowned out amidst the clamor of the crowd. In the age where people can get a “no-fault” divorce (When is it ever *nobody's* fault?) believers who claim to live by God's word cannot dodge the issue: we cannot skip it, run from it, or ignore it. God has spoken clearly on this subject and while it is far from easy to address, it must be dealt with. Combining a high view of marriage, compassion, and biblical authority, Tony Evans gives invaluable insight into divorce and remarriage as he explores real-life fears and

²²For Married Women Only: Three Principles for Honoring Your Husband, accessed October 27, 2013. Tony Evans. [http://www.amazon.com/For-Married-Women-Only-Principles/dp/0802443834/ref= pd_sim_b_46](http://www.amazon.com/For-Married-Women-Only-Principles/dp/0802443834/ref=pd_sim_b_46).

²³*For Married Men Only: Three Principles for Honoring your Wife*, accessed October 27, 2013, Tony Evans. http://www.amazon.com/For-Married-Men-Only-Principles/dp/0802443834/ref= pd_sim_b_46.

²⁴Ibid.

questions by looking at the issue from God's vantage point, not from our emotional one.”²⁵

The 5 Sex Needs of Men & Women by Ginger Kolbaba, Barbara Rosberg and Gary Rosberg “provides a straightforward and candid look at the different sex needs that both men and women bring to a marriage.” The Rosbergs both educate and challenge married couples to develop a godly view of sexual intimacy. This book does not cover sexual techniques; instead, the specifics include the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of sex within a marriage. This book opens the lines of communication so that a couple can openly discuss their needs and experience sexual intimacy according to God's design.²⁶

The Total Money Makeover: A Proven Plan for Financial Fitness by Dave Ramsey. “The success stories speak for themselves in this book from money maestro Dave Ramsey. Instead of promising the normal dose of quick fixes, Ramsey offers a bold, no-nonsense approach to money matters, providing not only the how-to but also a grounded and uplifting hope for getting out of debt and achieving total financial health. Ramsey debunks the many myths of money (exposing the dangers of cash advance, rent-to-own, debt consolidation) and attacks the illusions and downright deceptions of the American dream, which encourages nothing but overspending and massive amounts of

²⁵*Divorce and Remarriage*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Divorce-Remarriage-Tony-Evans/dp/0802408516/ref=pd_sim_b_17.

²⁶*The 5 Sex Needs of Men & Women*, http://www.amazon.com/The-Sex-Needs-Men-Women/dp/1414301847/ref=pd_sim_b_88.

debt. "Don't even consider keeping up with the Joneses," Ramsey declares in his typically candid style. "They're broke!"²⁷

Rich Dad Poor Dad: What The Rich Teach Their Kids About Money That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not! by Robert T. Kiyosaki. Rich Dad Poor Dad, the #1 Personal Finance book of all time, tells the story of Robert Kiyosaki and his two dads—his real father and the father of his best friend, his rich dad—and the ways in which both men shaped his thoughts about money and investing. The book explodes the myth that you need to earn a high income to be rich and explains the difference between working for money and having your money work for you.²⁸

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change by Stephen R. Covey “presents a holistic, integrated, principle-centered approach for solving personal and professional problems. With penetrating insights and pointed anecdotes, Covey reveals a step-by-step pathway for living with fairness, integrity, service, and human dignity--principles that give us the security to adapt to change and the wisdom and power to take advantage of the opportunities that change creates.”²⁹

The Spirit of Python: Exposing Satan's Plan to Squeeze the Life Out of You by Jentezen Franklin. Pythons have an interesting way of killing their prey. They constrict it until it can no longer breathe, literally suffocating the life out of it. In the spirit realm

²⁷*The Total Money Makeover: A Proven Plan for Financial Fitness*, accessed October 13, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/The-Total-Money-Makeover-Financial/dp/159555078X/ref=pd_sim_b_97.

²⁸*Rich Dad Poor Dad: What The Rich Teach Their Kids About Money That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!* accessed 10/27/2013, http://www.amazon.com/Rich-Dad-Poor-Teach-Middle/dp/1612680011/ref=pd_sim_b_28.

²⁹*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/The-Habits-Highly-Effective-People/dp/0743269519/ref=pd_sim_b_16.

Satan often works in the same way, slowly slithering his way into our lives, attempting to choke the very life out of us. The python spirit can squeeze the joy out of your worship and prayers. It can pressure you to keep quiet when God wants you to speak up. And it can steal the peace of knowing that you belong to God. But there is a way to defeat him. You don't have to become his prey.³⁰

The Spirit of Python helps you understand the strategies of this subtle destroyer, how he works, how to detect him, and how to break his hold from your life. You can learn to: 1) Recognize the early warning signs that you are under attack; 2) Find the ways you may have unknowingly given him access into your home; and 3) Bring God's deliverance and restoration into every area of your life. We are in the middle of an unseen spiritual war. God wants to break the coils of the serpent off of your life. He wants to help you breathe again.³¹

Commanding Your Morning: Unleash the Power of God in Your Life by Cindy Trimm. Your Words Have Power. If you want your life to change, it all starts with what you think and say. In her authoritative, declarative style, Cindy Trimm helps you achieve victory over your circumstances through spoken declarations that activate God's power. You will put meaning and purpose back into your life when you positively direct your thoughts, words, and actions toward the realization of your goals. Begin each day by

³⁰*The Spirit of Python: Exposing Satan's Plan to Squeeze the Life Out of You*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Spirit-Python-Exposing-Satans-Squeeze/dp/1621362205/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382929104&sr=1-1&keywords=jentzen+franklin+spirit+of+python.

³¹*Ibid.*

commanding your morning. As you do, know that whatever begins with God and His principles, has to end right.³²

Prayers That Break Curses: Prayers for Breaking Demonic Influences so You Can Walk in God's Promises by John Eckhardt. Is your life characterized by continual setbacks and misfortune? Does it appear as though no matter what you do, you cannot seem to obtain the blessings of the Lord? You could be living under a curse.

Unfortunately, there are still many believers living under curses even though they have been legally redeemed. Just as a believer may have to fight a good fight of faith for healing, he or she may also have to fight a good fight of faith against curses. Satan may not have a legal right to enforce a curse against you, but he is an outlaw and will attempt to do so anyway. Therefore, curses oftentimes have to be broken, and you must learn how to stand in faith against those curses, keeping them from operating in your life. The promises God gives us in the Bible are not automatic. They must be believed and often fought for. You don't have to fight God for His promises; He is not keeping them back from you. But you must contend with the Adversary who is trying to prevent you from receiving and walking in God's promises.³³

Divine Revelation Of The Spirit Realm by Mary Baxter “gives a unique perspective into the angelic and demonic realms. In vivid detail, she describes her

³²*Commanding Your Morning: Unleash the Power of God in Your Life*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Commanding-Your-Morning-Unleash-Power/dp/1599791773/ref=pd_sim_b_4.

³³*Prayers That Break Curses: Prayers for Breaking Demonic Influences so You Can Walk in God's Promises*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Prayers-That-Break-Curses-Influences/dp/1599799448/ref=pd_sim_b_25.

encounters with spiritual beings, both good and bad, as she shares anointed insights into conducting spiritual warfare. This is a strategy manual for spiritual warfare!³⁴

Who Switched Off Your Brain?: Solving the Mystery of He Said / She Said—

August 30, 2011 by Caroline Leaf Ph.D. “Relating with members of the opposite sex can be frustrating and difficult – but it doesn't have to be. In the much-anticipated follow-up to her best-selling book, *Who Switched Off My Brain?* Dr. Caroline Leaf shows how men and women have been created to complement one another through their own unique strengths. Men and women are not the same—we do not think the same, talk the same or act the same. These differences aren't a result of our environments and our upbringing—they are built in by design. More than a marriage or relationship book, *Who Switched Off Your Brain?* is filled with key insights that will help you better understand the often mysterious behavior of the opposite sex and practical tips that will quickly improve your relationships.³⁵

Celebrate The Power In Your Right To Choose by Katrina Ferguson. Your power

is in your ability to make daily choices that will propel you towards your destiny; so celebrate the fact that you have the right to make a choice and thereby take control of your own life. This book includes thirty days of choices designed to be read, meditated upon and written about in the enclosed journal that is located in the back of the book. The

³⁴*Divine Revelation Of The Spirit Realm* accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Divine-Revelation-The-Spirit-Realm/dp/0883686236/ref=pd_sim_b_38.

³⁵*Who Switched Off Your Brain?: Solving the Mystery of He Said / She Said*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Who-Switched-Off-Your-Brain/dp/0981956742/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382931067&sr=1-4&keywords=caroline+leaf.

journal will ask you thought provoking questions which will allow you to meditate on what you have learned and to record the steps you make toward living your destiny.³⁶

Fixing the Money Thing: A practical Guide to Your Financial Success by Gary Keesee. "Do You Need to "Fix Your Money Thing?" Fighting waves of debt is hard enough - but you don't need to drown. Financial expert Gary Keesee has tossed you a lifeline, and it can save your life and transform your future! From struggling financially to building a successful worldwide ministry and enjoying financial freedom, author Gary Keesee shares his journey and the proven principles that will help you take back control of your finances—and your life. Discover the spiritual laws of God's Kingdom and exactly how to apply them: 1) Put a plan in place to be out of debt in less than seven years (including your mortgage!); 2) Save money on every purchase; 3) Uncover the hidden intersection of spiritual truth and financial principles; 4) Take back ownership of your life; and 5) Even find lost money you didn't know existed! Fixing the Money Thing isn't about numbers and budgets - it's about changing your thinking, and how that will change your life.³⁷

Eat This And Live: Simple food choices that can help you feel better, look younger, and live longer! by Donald Colbert. From the New York Times bestselling author of *The Seven Pillars of Health* comes this guide that teaches readers what the

³⁶*Celebrate The Power In Your Right To Choose*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Celebrate-Power-Your-Right-Choose/dp/0982818017/ref=sr_1_5?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382931506&sr=1-5&keywords=katrina+ferguson.

³⁷*Fixing the Money Thing: A practical Guide to Your Financial Success*, accessed October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Fixing-Money-Thing-practical-Financial/dp/0768436842/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1382931720&sr=1-1&keywords=gary+keesee.

Bible has to say about food. Dr. Colbert gives his recommendations on which foods to eat heartily, eat in moderation, or avoid all together.³⁸

Integrity Below the Belt, by Dewayne Freeman “Sex has become such a huge part of the world’s culture; It has invaded the media and entertainment industries, as well as the home and school environments. God’s gift to married men and women has been exploited (or perverted) and integrated into our everyday lives. Pornography, molestation, prostitution, sex trafficking, adultery, premarital sex, and activities as such are rampant among us. As this generation becomes overtaken by the consequences of satisfying lustful desires, it is crucial that we teach and enforce God’s original intent for sexual intimacy. Integrity Below the Belt is an essential teaching, founded upon Biblical principles, designed to educate and empower readers to live a life of sexual purity. Understanding that sexual purity is applicable to everyone, in every stage of life, this message speaks to the young and old, married and single, male and female audiences. Prepare your heart to receive revelatory principles that will ignite and increase your commitment to live a sexually pure lifestyle.”³⁹

³⁸*Eat This And Live: Simple food choices that can help you feel better, look younger, and live longer*, October 27, 2013, http://www.amazon.com/Eat-This-Live-choices-younger/dp/1599795191/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1383180685&sr=1-3.

³⁹*Integrity Below the Belt*, accessed 5/18/2014, http://www.amazon.com/Integrity-Below-Belt-Dewayne-Freeman-ebook/dp/B00H87B20A/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1400460801&sr=1-1&keywords=integrity+below+the+belt.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Biblical Foundation

Old Testament

Do two walk together except they make an appointment and have agreed?¹ A house divided against itself cannot stand.

God Instructions to the First Man

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”² A Godly marriage should be fruitful.

After God made provision for Adam, water, food, gold, onyx, etc. then [t]he Lord God took the man [Adam] and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Before Eve was created, God gave Adam provision, put him to work and gave him instructions. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for

¹Am 3:3 (AMP).

²Gn 1:27–28 (NIV).

when you eat from it you will certainly die.” The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.³ Marriage is the union created by God between man and woman. The man now having God’s provision, resources, and works is able to leave his parents and provide for his wife.

God’s Instructions Not Followed

Now the serpent was craftier than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”⁴ “The serpent, bypassing the leadership of the man, went straight to the woman, who was by nature the follower, and enticed her to do the one thing God told [Adam]... not to do: eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She took the fruit, ate it, and gave it to her husband. Here we see a role reversal.”⁵

Eve was created to be a suitable helper to Adam, the instructions given by God to Adam was not followed. Per *The Blessing* by Kenneth Copeland, this fruit was to be set-

³Gn 2:20-24 (NIV).

⁴Gn 3:1 (NIV).

⁵J. F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Fulfilled Family* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1981).

aside for God so that the first family would have the blessing continuous in their lives.

Adam and Eve failure to obey God's instructions caused separation from God. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God ... and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you? He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" Instead of Adam owning up to his failure to follow God's instructions, he blames his behavior on his wife.

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the Lord God said to the woman, what is this you have done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled (cheated, outwitted, and deceived) me, and I ate. And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, you are cursed above all [domestic] animals and above every [wild] living thing of the field; upon your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust [and what it contains] all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring; He will bruise *and* tread your head underfoot, and you will lie in wait *and* bruise His heel.⁶ To the woman ...[God] said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

⁶Gn 3:13–15 (AMP).

Adam and Eve's sin hindered God's plan for man and wife to be one flesh and walk in unity.

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Sin bought lack of God's provision and separation from God and eventual physical death.

Although Adam and Eve sinned, God still made provision for them. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.⁷

Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. After Adam and Eve sin, they were still fruitful, and sin was past to the next generation.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with

⁷Gn 3:16-23 (NIV).

favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Abel honored God with a first fruit offering.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." Instead of Cain repenting of his sin to be accepted by God, he perpetuates his sin with offense.

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Cain's offense led to the first reported domestic violence and murder.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" God then gives Cain the same option as his father to accept responsibility for his choice.

The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth." Instead of Cain obeying God's instructions to receive God's provision, his sin separates him from God.

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." But the Lord said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord

put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.⁸ God still showed mercy to Cain and prevented Cain from immediate physical death.

The story of Adam and Eve and their children demonstrated the impact of disobeying God's commandment resulting in the lack of provision, continuous fellowship with God and everlasting life. [God's] ...people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children."⁹ Their ignorance was willful, as the epithet, "*My people*," implies; they ought to have known, having the opportunity, as the people of God.¹⁰ Not only those who then were alive should be deprived of the priesthood, but their children who, in the ordinary course would have succeeded them, should be set aside.¹¹ The preacher or teacher who sins in this way is not only responsible for his own misdeeds, but also of those whom he misled.¹²

And the Lord said, Behold, they are one people and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do, and now nothing they have imagined they can do will be impossible for them.¹³

⁸Gn 4:1–16 (NIV).

⁹Ho 4:6 (NIV).

¹⁰Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), Ho 4:6.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Duane A. Garrett, "Hosea, Joel," *The New American Commentary*, vol. 19A (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 118.

¹³Gn 11:6 (AMP).

The Extreme Marital Conflict

Hosea 3:1 states, “Then the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.” Prior to this instruction, God tells Hosea to marry a prostitute, Gomer, knowing she actively participates in prostitution. Gomer, although married to Hosea still chooses to participate in adulterous activities; all the while, Hosea is encouraged to remain faithful to her. After some time passes, God tells Hosea to go find his wife and bring her back to dwell together as man and wife.

Hosea’s first and most important step was hearing and knowing God’s voice in order to follow the instructions for restoring his wife. Some marital conflict may result in one of the partners in the relationship being committed to consistently working toward making the marriage strong, vibrant, and passionate. Even if there is only one willing to work toward bettering the marriage, the Hosea passage shows that it only takes that one hearing and knowing the voice of God to see change.

Hosea not only hears and knows the voice of God, but upon hearing God’s voice he obeys. This can make all the difference in the world. It is better to obey God than to offer a sacrifice. What God instructs couples to carry out, like in Hosea, may be the exact opposite of what a spouse wants to do.

When believers find themselves in troubled marriages, great benefit lies in obeying the voice of God. Job 36:11 states; “If they obey and serve ...[God], they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures.” The obedience may be in the seemingly trivial such as, say something specific to your mate at a specific time or it may

be a great act of faith such as, and forgive your mate for infidelity. Whether trivial or great, obedience to God is always in order and will always produce great results.

The next portion of the scripture begins the instructions. God tells Hosea, “Go again...” In other words, God admonishes Hosea to pursue his wife, chase after her. Often times in marriages when trouble arises, one spouse, experience feelings of neglect. They may even conclude their spouse does not love or even want them because the interest and pursuit that took place during the early stages of their relationship are long gone.

One way a spouse pursues his or her mate is found in praying for them. Another means of pursuing a spouse is performing acts of kindness. Showing interest in their spouse’s interests, taking time out of one’s schedule to spend quality time together or even a note saying, “I love you,” speaks volumes to a spouse’s importance. All this coupled with consistency and tenacity will make a spouse know that they are loved, wanted, and desired. A spouse should not give up easily when facing adversity or trouble in the marriage.

Then [Hosea]...told [his wife], “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.” Hosea’s experience mirrors [God]... As one who has endured faithlessness by a spouse, Hosea has earned the right to speak for God. The very structure of the text points to the sympathy between ...[God] and Hosea that arises from shared experience.¹⁴

After all that was done by Hosea to reconcile conflict with his spouse, God’s word does gives the faithful spouse a choice to forgive the unfaithful spouse into

¹⁴Garrett, *The New American Commentary*, 98.

reconciliation as Hosea did. He would not immediately receive her to marriage privileges, but would test her repentance and discipline her by the long probation; still the marriage covenant would hold good, she was to be kept separated for but a time, not divorced (Is 50:1); in God's good time she shall be restored.¹⁵

Results of Unfaithfulness

Just as Cain did not find favor with God because of his offering, in Malachi 2, Judah also bought offering to God but failed to follow God's instructions in marriage by marrying persons of another faith. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.¹⁶

Results of Faithfulness

In her own land Ruth had married Mahlon (Ru 4:10), who died during a famine. Naomi was also widowed and then her two sons died without heirs. She determined to return to her native country, whereupon Ruth announced that she intended to accompany her, adopting both her nation and her God. Only by death would they be separated (Ru 1:17).¹⁷

He [Boaz] said [Ruth] had worked steadily from the time she came in the morning ... except for a short rest in the shelter that apparently was provided for the workers. He

¹⁵Ho 3:3.

¹⁶Mal 2:13-14 (NIV).

¹⁷D. R. W. Wood, & I. H. Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1029.

noticed that she was a diligent worker.¹⁸ Ruth 2:11; Boaz knew much about Ruth. News about her had traveled rapidly throughout the small town. Boaz, deeply moved by what Ruth had done for Naomi, spoke to Ruth in words of high affirmation.¹⁹

In Ruth 2:12, Boaz prayed that God would reward Ruth as repayment for the kindness she had displayed to her mother-in-law. He strengthened his request by asking that she be richly rewarded by the God she had come to trust.²⁰ Soon Boaz would be used by God to answer his own prayer.²¹

In the next chapter of Ruth, Naomi instructs Ruth regarding Boaz and Ruth follows Naomi's direction. Naomi instructs Ruth, "Take a bath. Put on some perfume. Get all dressed up and go to the threshing floor. But don't let him know you're there until the party is well under way and he's had plenty of food and drink.²² When you see him slipping off to sleep, watch where he lies down and then go there. Lie at his feet to let him know that you are available to him for marriage. Then wait and see what he says. He'll tell you what to do."²³

By lying at his [Boaz] feet, Ruth humbled herself as one of his servants. She trusted God to use Boaz to answer her needs and to protect her. Then ...[Ruth] told

¹⁸J. F Walvoord, R. B. Zuck & Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books 1983), Ru 2:7.

¹⁹Ibid., Ru 2:11.

²⁰Ibid., Ru 2:12.

²¹Ibid.

²²E. H. Peterson, (2002). *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), Ru 3:3.

²³Ibid., Ru 3:4.

...[Naomi everything Boaz had done for her ¹⁷ and added, “He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”

Then Naomi said, “Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today.”²⁴ Ruth was married to Boaz, and their first child Obed was given to Naomi to continue the names of Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion. He was the grandfather of David (1 Chr 2:12; Mt 1:5), which is Jesus’ genealogy.²⁵ Not long after the marriage the Lord “gave her conception.” She who had not been able to conceive by her young husband Mahlon, was enabled by God to conceive by the much older Boaz (4:13).²⁶

New Testament

If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.²⁷

And knowing their thoughts, He [Jesus] said to them, “Any kingdom that is divided against itself is being brought to desolation and laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will last *or* continue to stand.”²⁸

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.²⁹ The researcher learned from Dr. Creflo Dollar and Dr. Mike Freeman that submission means to get under the mission.

²⁴Ru 3:16-18 (NIV).

²⁵Wood, & Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*.

²⁶J. E. Smith, *The Books of History* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), Ru 4:13–17.

²⁷Mk 3:25 (NIV).

²⁸Mt 12:25 (AMP).

²⁹Eph 5:21 (NIV).

[B]elievers whose lives have been filled by God's Spirit will be marked by submission within divinely ordered relationships.³⁰

In the same way you married men should live considerately with [your wives], with an intelligent recognition [of the marriage relation], honoring the woman as [physically] the weaker, but [realizing that you] are joint heirs of the grace (God's unmerited favor) of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered *and* cut off. [Otherwise you cannot pray effectively.]³¹

For example, the wife is to be subject to the authority of her husband, but her husband is to be subject to the needs of the wife.³²

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:3-4). Maintaining an attitude of loving concern for one another strips authority of its rights and also strips submission of its humiliation. Whatever role we have been given provides an opportunity to serve our brothers and sisters in the Lord.³³

As the passage continues, Ephesians 5:26-33, addresses the love of a husband to his wife and the respect of a husband from his wife.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as

³⁰Peter Thomas O'Brien, "The Letter to the Ephesians," *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 398-99.

³¹1 Pt 3:7 (AMP).

³²Max Anders, "Galatians-Colossians," *Holman New Testament Commentary*, vol. 8 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 173.

³³Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 930.

Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.³⁴

Paul presents Jesus Christ as both the last Adam, succeeding where the first Adam failed. Remember that marriage is for life (vv. 39–40). It is God’s will that the marriage union be permanent, a lifetime commitment. There is no place in Christian marriage for a trial marriage, nor is there any room for the escape hatch attitude: If the marriage does not work, we can always get a divorce.

For this reason, marriage must be built on something sturdier than good looks, money, romantic excitement, and social acceptance. There must be Christian commitment, character, and maturity. There must be a willingness to grow, to learn from each other, to forgive and forget, to minister to one another. The kind of love Paul described in 1 Corinthians 13 is what is needed to cement two lives together.³⁵

The writings of E. W. Kenyon (1867–1948), ...incorporated a metaphysical view into his biblical teachings. Kenyon believed that the spirit world controls and shapes the physical world, and that the Christian should speak that which he or she wants to occur. Speaking it with sufficient words (rhema) of faith will cause the physical world to conform to the spiritual (faith) world.³⁶ From this concept of a word that produces results has sprung the belief in the Word of Faith Movement in speaking into existence that

³⁴Eph 5:25-33 (NIV).

³⁵W. W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 1 Co 7:25.

³⁶K. Boa & W. Kruidenier, “Romans,” *Holman New Testament Commentary*, vol. 6 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 323-324.

which faith conceives.³⁷ If we have not experienced what the rhema of God has promised, we are to confess that it is ours by a word of faith until God's rhema is actualized in our existence.³⁸

Consistently applying God's word with wisdom will transform marriage. By following God's established order for marriage will cause wholeness, nothing broke and nothing missing. God's plan for marriage is for husband and wife to live together in love, unity, and harmony.

A relationship with God that does not have Jesus Christ at its center, leading into holy and spirit filled living, is not a real saving relationship at all. A man or woman who has had a soul saving encounter with Jesus Christ will joyfully wish to follow and obey the second man, standing at the head of a new humanity.³⁹

Reform Act of 1969, there has been efforts to make possible remarriage after divorce in certain cases.⁴⁰

Church law regarding marriage became important toward the end of the first millennium. Up to then Christians married according to tradition and secular law. The NT had given new emphasis to married life but left the form of marrying unchanged. In the → early church there is only sparse testimony to its influence on the form (→ Ignatius, → Tertullian) but many more references to the moral demands in marriage. From the fourth century a → blessing was added at the → wedding. In the East this feature became the legal basis of marriage and hence obligatory (before 896, in a *novella* of Emperor Leo VI). At the same time, church principles became important in marriage law, as may be seen in controversies

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹M. H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London, UK: Martin Manser, 1999).

⁴⁰E. Fahlbusch, & G. W. Bromiley, *The encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill 2003), 420.

about the legitimacy of imperial marriages (Constantine VI [780–97], at the time of Empress Irene [780–802]; also the four marriages of Leo VI [886–912]).⁴¹

[T]he church's attitude toward marriage and divorce tightened rather than loosened after the Reformation. But church courts were “not purveyors of outmoded or unwanted values,” as earlier researchers had suggested, and they pried into private life less.⁴²

Let the wife make the husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave. — Martin Luther⁴³

In the Talmudic and medieval periods, the engagement of a man and woman was formalized in a ceremony called *shidukhin*, at which the financial conditions of the marriage (*tenaim*) were set. Today, some communities practice what is known as a *wort* (Yiddish for “word”), at which the couple informally announces the engagement, while the *tenaim* ceremony takes place immediately prior to the wedding.⁴⁴

[A]mong the love letters of Abelard and Eloise (she died A.D. 1142), hers are the most moving expressions of love in the whole medieval period. The word for seal describes an amulet worn either round the neck (Gn 38:18) or as a ring on the hand (Gn 41:42; Jer. 22:24). Thus it could be quickly unfastened and used to seal a document. She does not ask him for an engagement ring to be placed on the fourth finger of her left hand, as a modern woman would expect from her beloved. She asks him to take her herself into his very heart, and make *her* the seal of their love. The seal revealed that their promise of love to each other was forever.⁴⁵

⁴¹Ibid., 418.

⁴²American Academy of Religion, & Society of Biblical Literature. (1990). *Critical Review of Books in Religion*, 1990: 291.

⁴³R. B. Zuck, (1997). *The Speaker's Quote Book: Over 4,500 Illustrations and Quotations For All Occasions* (241). (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997), 241.

⁴⁴*The encyclopedia of Judaism*, vol. 2, J. Neusner, A. J. Avery-Peck & W. S. Green, eds. (Boston, MA: Brill, 2000), 801.

⁴⁵G. A. F. Knight & F. W. Golka, “Revelation of God,” *International Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1988), 40.

The wife is transformed from an unimportant adjunct, which exists only to meet her husband's needs, to a person of intrinsic worth and value, becoming the focus of her husband's concern. Instead of demanding that she live for him, he begins to live for her! Rather than keeping her under, he seeks to lift her up. Christian headship lifts the wife up as the rightful object of a husband's loving concern.⁴⁶

The author of *Exc. Theod* 56 concludes this exegesis by citing 1 Corinthians 15:47: 'therefore our father Adam is "the first man from earth, earthy"' (*Exc. Theod.* 56:1–2). The author of the Gospel of Philip apparently alludes to the same passage to contrast Adam, the 'earthly man', with Christ, the 'man from heaven' (Gos. Phil. 28; cf. also log. 23, which cites 1 Corinthians 15:50).⁴⁷

When U. → Zwingli and M. Bucer (1522), and later M. → Luther (1525), married, they were protesting not simply against celibacy but against the exalting of monasticism. They were also rediscovering the divinely given freedom of all people to accept marriage, sexuality, natural love, and the procreating and rearing of children as a calling or → vocation. The thesis of Luther (1483–1546) that marriage is a "worldly thing" (a wording that critics have often misunderstood) is obviously putting the public estate of marriage under the jurisdiction of the "authorities" (→ Two Kingdoms Doctrine). It views marriage, not as a sacrament that dispenses grace, but as a divinely willed, "holy," and "blessed" estate, an order set up by the word of the Creator. Marriage denotes the "sacrament of your dear, Son Jesus Christ and the church, his bride"⁴⁸

The Genesis text, then, affirms that marriage makes husband and wife one body; it also explicates the union between Christ and the church. The parallels between the two are central to the apostle's argument,²⁹⁴ and their relationship is best understood in terms of typology. 'The first Adam's love for his wife as *one flesh* with himself and the last Adam's love for his own bride, his body, are . . . the typology [that] serves Paul's pastoral purpose of providing a model for Christian marriage which is grounded in primeval human origins and reflective of ultimate divine reality'. Theologically, Paul's argument does not move from human

⁴⁶L. Richards, & L. O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 931.

⁴⁷A. H. B Logan & A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McL. Wilson* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2004), 163.

⁴⁸Fahlbusch, & Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 415.

marriage to Christ and his church; rather, Christ and the church in a loving relationship is the paradigm for the Christian husband and wife.⁴⁹

The marriage of the Church to Christ is still future. Israel's marriage to Jehovah is history.⁵⁰

In the coming kingdom of Messiah the distinction between Israel and the Church is still more obvious. Israel, as a nation, is seen through prophetic vision to be on the earth as subjects of the kingdom and in her kingdom glory, while the Church is said to be co-reigning with Christ (Rev 20:6). As His Bride and Consort, it is the rightful place of the Church to share in His reign.⁵¹

The Reformers did not differ radically in their views of marriage. P. Melancthon (1497–1560) worked out precise criteria for divorce, and Zwingli (1484–1531) concerned himself with the duties of the Zurich council in this regard, and with other practical matters, as did also H. Bullinger (1504–75). Calvin (1509–64), whose statements in *Inst.* 4.19 are characterized especially by a sharp rejection of the Roman Catholic sacramental view, emphasized in his preaching, commentaries, and especially in his practical work in Geneva the fact that as an order, marriage is a gift of God to the partners and to the family that they establish.⁵²

The sex act at its best in marriage is the most intimate and complete reciprocal self-giving of which two people are capable. Sexual union profoundly and permanently

⁴⁹P. T. O'Brien, "The Letter to the Ephesians," *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1999), 432-33.

⁵⁰A. G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 296.

⁵¹L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 33.

⁵²Fahlbusch & Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 415.

affects the married couple in the very core of their being. Sex relations, then, add another strand to the marriage bond.⁵³

Without the definite intention of establishing a marriage relationship, both Old Testament and New Testament disapprove of premarital and extramarital relations. Paul warned that even a sexual liaison with a prostitute makes the two persons one flesh (1 Cor 6:16). Theological and psychological evidence suggests that varying degrees of attachment result from acts of sexual intercourse, however casual they may seem initially. In the Old Testament period if an unmarried, unbetrothed couple were discovered in the act of sexual relations, the young man was forced to take the woman as his wife and make a payment of money to her father (Dt 22:29).⁵⁴

Theological ethics does not presume to control the marriages of millions of Christians, nor by looking at the historical development of marriage does it claim to describe the history of actual marriages across the centuries. Nevertheless, one should not underestimate its tasks and possibilities in an age that is seeking direction and models. The younger generation in the industrialized world vacillates a good deal in its readiness for the institution of marriage and family.⁵⁵

The Puritan researcher Matthew Henry had the right idea when he wrote:

Eve was not made out of Adam's head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be

⁵³J. S. Feinberg, & P. D. Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 304.

⁵⁴G. W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 265.

⁵⁵Fahlbusch & Bromiley *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 417.

loved'. Husbands are to love their wives even when they do not feel like it. They must look after them properly and live with them happily (1 Cor 7:3–5; 1 Pt 3:7).⁵⁶

Theological Foundations

The doctrine of the Church, from the Christian standpoint the Bible is unique, as being the inspired record of a unique revelation. It is the record of the special preparation for Christ, and of His direct impact upon men, through His life, death, and resurrection.⁵⁷ Additionally, it covers the four fields of 1) God as Creator; 2) creation out of nothing; 3) the world and human beings as creation; and 4) God's relation with his creation.⁵⁸

God is directly related to couple transformation. In marriage, the researcher believes that God views the husband and wife as one, although they have distinct roles. The researcher also believes that operating in God's agape love will cover (forgive) a multitude of sins, as mentioned in the Bible. While the Bible instructs the husband to love his wife, as Jesus loved the church and sacrificed his life. The Bible instructs the wife to respect her husband similar to the relationship to God and Jesus. Jesus submits himself to God but also has free will and does so as an ultimate expression of love. A practical illustration of a wife's role is similar to the employer/employee relationship. In that the employer should provide a paycheck (provision) to the employee. The employee should submit to the instructions of the employer within ethical boundaries. The role of the Holy Spirit and salvation is also very essential for couples. When the couple receives salvation,

⁵⁶I. S. McNaughton, "Opening up Colossians and Philemon." *Opening Up Commentary* (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2006), 75.

⁵⁷G. R. Evans & J. R. Wright, *The Anglican tradition: A Handbook of Sources* (London, UK: SPCK, 19910), 403.

⁵⁸Fahlbusch, & Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 722.

the Holy Spirit accompanies them in the transformation process (mind renewal to corresponding actions). The Holy Spirit enables a submitted couple to walk in love and unity according to Amos 3:3 to a goal of wholeness in mind, health, wealth, family, and community.

The Doctrine of the Trinity addresses Creator (Father), Redeemer (Jesus/Son), and Sustainer (Holy Spirit), one God, with three distinct yet related roles. The researcher believes that God's perfect plan for marriage is for both male and female to unify as one. Thus, God did not prioritize male over female but provided order for the genders. The researcher believes that the gender preferences' in God's ultimate plan (marriage) is for continuous love to be fully operational, without sin.

- 1) Marriage is a reflection of a man and a woman having distinct roles but is seen as one couple, Mr. & Mrs. _____. The name changes is an example that they both may share in the same last name, but the first name can distinguish the two apart.
- 2) The researcher believes that understanding the roles of the trinity may assist with effective implementation of the Christian Faith.
- 3) The researcher believes that applied knowledge maximizes a person's potential to understand.

The Doctrine of the person of Christ is very essential to the Christian Faith. The birth, baptism by water and the Holy Spirit, wilderness experience, death and resurrection is the foundation of the researcher's faith. Christ does serve as a model, mediator, hero, and bearer of the Holy Spirit. His ultimate love for his bride, the church, speaks volumes for the researcher's project for the love of a husband and wife. The researcher sees the uniqueness of Christ two natures as truly divine and truly human and the various important roles of Christ as Messiah and Son of God, healer, redeemer, intercessor to name a few.

The project will examine couple transformation from Adam and Eve to the ultimate relationship of Jesus Christ to the church. Jesus Christ serving as a model for the husband. God's redemption plan for marriage clearly defines roles and responsibilities to the husband and wife. Submitting one to another; husband is the head of the family, loves his wife unconditionally and the wife respects her husband. The anticipated results are happy marriages, less divorces and broken families.

The Doctrine of Salvation in Christ, the researcher agrees with John McLeod Campbell quotes, and Irenaeus recapitulation, that Christ is the bridge between sin and redemption. The researcher agrees that salvation is a past, present, and future elements, McGrath. The researcher appreciates the spiritual laws that were set aside by sin and mediated by Christ between God and man, McGrath 320. The researcher believes that hell was created for Lucifer and not for men and women. However, due to the first Adam's inability to follow God's instructions, Christ, referred by some as the second Adam, regains the ability for humans not to follow the same destination of Lucifer, McGrath 323. Anselm's treatise summarizes well, why God became human, McGrath 326. Additionally, the researcher agrees with Augustine that the underlying mission of Christ is the demonstration of God's love towards the human race. Through Christ, the human race has the ability to live according to God's plan for holiness. The author believes that God's design for both male and female, and female originating from Adam's rib; a man with a womb, is a master plan for populating the earth.

Because of the doctrine of salvation, families no longer have to live according to the fall of man, sin. Salvation gives a husband and wife a new blue print. Couples now have the ability to let love replace blame. Salvation replaces the Old Testament law with

grace. Jesus now intercedes for the church due to his ultimate sacrifice on the cross. The researcher believes that salvation is a solid foundation for couples to build upon.

The Doctrines of Human Nature, Sin, and Grace begins with the doctrine of creation in the image of God as a direct relationship to redemption to enjoy a perfect relationship with God. The researcher believes that both man and woman bear the image of God, similar to the church being referred to as the bride of Christ. Since the scriptures indicate that God sees a husband and wife as one flesh, couples reflect the image of God, just as the trinity reflects the image of God. The researcher agrees that God's original design for Adam was freedom from all weaknesses and disabilities, including first spiritual death followed by natural death. Additionally, the researcher agrees that just as sin was introduced into the human race through Adam, Jesus, also referred to as the second Adam, redeems the human race from sin through salvation. According to the dictionary, grace is defined as undeserved favor. Therefore, the researcher interprets it as a gift from God. The doctrine of justification by faith appears to be a foundation for Word of Faith, McGrath 360, faith is trust in God's words. Finally, the researcher believes that God predestines all humans to be in right relationship but due to God's love, each person has a choice just like Adam.

The first couple was created in God's image. Due to the couple's choice to allow Satan's deception to cause them to lose the promises made available in the God of Eden, Christ offers the solution of redemption, which now enables the human race to receive God's provision through Grace and Faith. Each couple has to choose to operate according to the first Adam; role reversal, blame, shame, sin or the second Adam; provision, love, wholeness and righteousness.

Solomon and Shulamit begin to adjust sexually in marriage. At one point she refused Solomon's late night sexual advances, and this brings on a dream of Shulamit losing her beloved. It begins with a description of Solomon seeking admission to her late at night (5:2), but she refuses his sexual advances with flimsy excuses (5:3). As Solomon continues to try and show his longing for her, Shulamit is finally moved for him (5:4)⁵⁹

While proper attitudes can and should be developed before entering the marriage relationship, there is no allowance for practice in advance. The introduction to sexual relations is also an introduction to a learning experience. Mistakes will be made and should be recognized for what they are. Eventually, however, in the course of time, both husband and wife, teaching each other and learning from each other, should be able to attain a satisfying sexual adjustment. But it will take work and both partners will have to work at it.⁶⁰

Love is not an issue of attraction; it is a binding commandment from God. When you choose to love someone who is no longer attractive to you, he or she will soon become attractive. Loving as Christ loves does not depend on what others are in themselves, but entirely on what we are in Christ.⁶¹

“Husbands, don't tell me about your wife's problems that make it hard to love her—you are not as far removed from your wife as God was from sinners, yet He loved you. Your wife may be a sinner, but so are you. Do not lose that perspective.”⁶²

⁵⁹A. G. Fruchtenbaum, *Biblical Lovemaking: A Study of the Song of Solomon* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries Press, 1993), 48.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹J. MacArthur, *Different by Design*. MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 58.

⁶²Ibid.

When such people desire a partner, they look for physical attractiveness, personality, wit, prestige, or some other such positive characteristic. But that love is necessarily fickle because the moment the characteristic that motivated the love disappears, or loses its appeal, the love disappears. Many marriages fall apart simply because the relationship was founded on that kind of love.⁶³

⁶³MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 58.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The project context is Divine Fellowship Ministries located in Ellicott City, Maryland. Statistics show that 50% of marriages in the U.S. end in divorce, including Christians; and of this subgroup, 90% attributed to finances. The objective of this project is to empower couples with fundamental tools for continuous learning, *Marriage Made EZ (MMEZ) in 31 days*, to assist with understanding the purpose of marriage, setting goals, effective communication, fulfilling your spouse needs and wholeness; mind, body and spirit.

The hypothesis is through diligence, discipline, determination, and commitment to mastering [*MMEZ in 31 days*] ...[the couple] will experience God's perfect plan for—a Marriage Made EZ. *MMEZ in 31 days* will empower a couple to develop a joint agreed upon vision, know the purpose and their respective roles in marriage and set guidelines/boundaries for the couples' journey. Preparing for various challenges that may surface during their relationship journey and taking control of their circumstances, the couple can build a healthy, solid, stable marriage foundation. "If marriage in the earth realm represents Christ in the heavenlies and His relationship to the Body of Christ, then ...[a couple] must consider ...[their] priorities and how...[they] relate to each other in marriage."¹

¹Mike Freeman, *Marriage Made EZ In 31 Days* (Mitchellville, MD: FIG Publishing, 2012).

The project consisted of a five couple focus group utilizing *Marriage Made EZ In 31 Days*. The qualitative methodology employed pre and post surveys and true/false questionnaire and observations to measure the journey in couples before and after *Marriage Made EZ In 31 Days*.

Two sermon/lectures were given to encourage non focus group participants to utilize MMEZ in 31 days. Small group couple discussions with the focus group occurred before and after *MMEZ in 31 Days* was implemented to address the core tools needed for marriage covered on the survey and questionnaire. The researcher received and gave feedback, encouragement, and prayer to the focus group and non-focus group. The researcher distributed *MMEZ in 31 Days* to non-focused group participants.

Unlike the fairy tale ending where a couple gets married and lived happy ever after, the researcher believes that a healthy marriage requires daily intentional actions to maintain and grow. An unhealthy marriage requires even more strategic, intentional actions to transform into a healthy marriage. This chapter will provide recommendations to assist a couple on the journey to wholeness.

The researcher strongly recommends *MMEZ in 31 Days* as it begins with a couple's commitment to each other and their commitment to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The researcher also believes that this is the fundamental foundation to a healthy marriage. These first steps help to reverse the downward spiral effect that began with the first marriage of Adam and Eve. It is imperative for a couple to renew their mind by understanding that Jesus committed no sin. Accepting the gifts of the Holy Spirit by faith enables a couple to replicate Jesus example of love.

Having agape, God's, love will help a couple to not quit in the midst of adversity and challenges. With God's kind of love, a couple should focus on their part and confess over their spouse what they see, in God's word, as the promise. For example, if one spouse believes that their finances will improve 1) They should make positive daily confessions, biblically based, for God's promise over their finances; 2) Ensure that they are consistently tithing and giving according to God's word in love; 3) Join a church that walks integrity and pursues wholeness for the whole man based on biblical principles; 4) Seek wisdom, knowledge and understanding, regarding finances; a) create a budget and follow it; b) consider taking a course to understand inflation, operating a business and investing. 5) Consult with a proven financial advisor and/or seek out people who are operating in a positive cash flow and positive net worth. Per SOFCC, hang around those who have your answer instead of your problem. The couple must understand that while the facts may not appear to be the same as the truth found in God's word, facts can change and begin to align with God's word.

Just as God spoke the world into existence, the couple's words, whether positive or negative, will align with their perception/reality. "As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord's word is flawless; [H]e shields all who take refuge in him."² A couple should focus on God's promise for their life and not grow weary in the process. The temptation will be to dwell on the process instead of confessing the promise.³

Since mankind is created in God's image, just as Adam named every living creature, couples should make faith confessions of their promise for wholeness in mind, body, family, finances, and spiritually rather than getting distracted when things appear to

²Ps 18:30.

³Freeman, *Marriage Made EZ In 31 Days*.

be contrary to their faith. The couple should strongly consider having an accountability partner. This person should be a mature believer, happily married and of the same gender, unless both spouses are accountable jointly to the same person. If the spouse of the opposite gender communicates with the accountability partner, he/she should notify their spouse before/during when possible.

A couple completing MMEZ in 31 Days may result in establishing a joint vision, identifying their priorities, goal setting, family constitution, cash flow budget, realistic schedule, better communication skills, productive family meetings, health awareness, and better understanding of each spouse's sex needs, just to name a few benefits.

A couple should know that God's perfect will is for a marriage to be whole and restored. However, there are four biblical grounds for a marriage to end that the researcher recommends listening to a message taught by Pastor Dewayne Freeman in 2006, "Marriage, Remarriage, and Divorce." The biblical grounds do not necessarily mean that the marriage must end. A couple may choose to go through the process of *MMEZ in 31 Days* but may also need to employ additional methods when dealing with adultery, abuse, addiction and abandonment. The researcher learned from the series above that abandonment also covers an unbelieving spouse that chooses to go contrary to God's word but there is a biblical process to follow.

For example, if a spouse is found unfaithful emotionally or physically, the researcher recommends seeking professional counsel, establishing an accountability plan and additional measures based on the circumstances of the individual couple. If a spouse is abusive emotionally or physically, the couple must first ensure safety for the non-abusive spouse and children, etc. There may be legal protocol that should also be

considered, such as a protective order for spouse and/or children. The researcher is a subscriber to Legal Shield, which enables legal support for any matter for a small monthly fee. The non-abusive spouse should never remain silent. Putting light on destructive behavior helps to get help and support necessary to overcome abuse, addiction, addiction, and abandonment.

Below are the questions used to ascertain answers for data analysis for the pre/post test and the Marriage Made Easy in 31 Days process.

Communication

1. My spouse and I have open and honest communication.
2. My spouse and I have regular family meetings with each other.
3. My spouse listens to me and respects my opinion.
4. I listen to my spouse and respect my spouse's opinion.
5. Major decisions are made after my spouse and I have discussed and agreed.
6. My spouse and I have a written Family Constitution.
7. My spouse and I have a written Family Vision.
8. I abide by our Family Constitution.
9. My spouse abides by our Family Constitution.
10. My spouse and I discuss and agree on household chores.
11. I regularly tell or show my spouse appreciation.
12. My spouse regularly tells or shows me appreciation.

Finances

- 13. My spouse and I have a written family budget.
- 14. My spouse and I discuss how money should be spent.
- 15. My spouse and I regularly discuss our written financial plans with each other.
- 16. My spouse and I have a joint bank account.

Sex and Intimacy

- 17. My spouse and I discuss our health goals.
- 18. My spouse and I practice healthy eating and exercise.
- 19. My spouse shares with me what they think is attractive (appearance, fragrance, hair).
- 20. I share with my spouse what I think is attractive (appearance, fragrance, hair).
- 21. My spouse and I regularly consult with each other to stay attractive.
- 22. My schedule demonstrates that my spouse is my priority above other family and friends.
- 23. My spouse and I have at least one monthly date by ourselves.
- 24. I share my sexual and affection needs with my spouse.
- 25. My spouse shares their sexual and affection needs with me.
- 26. I meet my spouse's sexual and affection needs.
- 27. My spouse meets my sexual and affection needs.

Spirituality

- 28. My spouse knows my spiritual beliefs.
- 29. I know my spouse's spiritual beliefs.
- 30. My spouse and I make it a daily priority to live together in peace.
- 31. My spouse and I study God's Word and pray together at least once a week

True/False Questionnaire

Communication

1. I always tell my spouse where I am going.
2. My spouse and I have regular family meetings.
3. My spouse gives me undivided attention.
4. I give my spouse undivided attention.
5. My spouse and I always make joint agreements.
6. My spouse and I follow a written schedule.
7. My spouse and I update our written Family Vision.
8. My spouse and I refer to our Family Constitution when making joint decisions.
9. My spouse and I fairly share household responsibilities.
10. I feel appreciated by my spouse regularly.
11. My spouse appreciates me regularly.

Finances

12. My spouse and I regularly follow a written family budget.
13. My spouse and I often agree on how money should be spent.
14. My spouse and I meet weekly or monthly to discuss our written financial plans.

Sex and Intimacy

15. My spouse and I agree on our health goals.
16. My spouse and I practice both healthy eating and exercise weekly.
17. I consider what my spouse think is attractive for my appearance, fragrance, and hair.
18. My spouse considers what I think is attractive for their appearance, fragrance, and hair.

- 19. My spouse and I honor each other above other family and friends.
- 20. My spouse and I have weekly quality time of at least four hours by ourselves.
- 21. My spouse and I discuss our sexual and affection needs.

Spirituality

- 22. My spouse and I have common spiritual goals.
- 23. My spouse and I make it a priority to attend church weekly.
- 24. My spouse and I make it a daily priority to study God's word.
- 25. My spouse and I pray and make faith declarations together daily.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The data demonstrated that the couples post survey results improved from the pre survey results. While each couple had unique circumstances, there were also similarities. The couples all had at least two children, age range between ages thirty and fifty, with the average age being in the forties. The couples either lived or commuted to Ellicott City, Maryland weekly. Most of the couples had one or both spouses with a college education but the educational background varied from engineer, accountant, self-employed, home maker, finance, health care, real estate, utility, etc.

Some of the challenges affecting the pool of couples prior to the pre-survey were unemployment, home transition, infidelity, blended family, weight, pregnancy prior to marriage, care giver of parent, death of parent, miscarriage.

Some of the strengths of the focus group were: they were Christians, some couples had dual income, children excelling in education and sports. The researcher observed that some of the results of the couples completing *MMEZ In 31 Days* were increased recreational companionship, scheduled dates, changing careers, substantial debt reduction, healthy weight loss, increased entrepreneurs. The kids also participated in more community activities together.

The positive impacts of the focus group were that the discussion environment was extremely helpful in discussing sensitive areas of marriage and getting different

perspectives and gender similarities. The small group was also supportive of challenges that individual spouses encountered, such as taking up a donation when a spouse was in a career transition. The small group did fun events together, such as cook out, prepare a cooked dish, had pizza, etc.

The focus group served as accountability partners to one another, had weekly support, and proactively participated in marriage outreach and had counselor support available. Whereas the non-focused group did not benefit from the above mentioned tools/resources resulting in delays in completion, frustration by one if not both spouses, and for some an abandonment of tools received due to losing sight of the promise in the midst of the process.

There were five couples that participated in the focus group. To assist with radical honesty, the researcher designated one couple to collect the results of the Pre/Post Survey and True/False Questions. The data results will show the percentage of increase/decrease. In comparing the Pre/Post Survey, if a percentage is over 100, the data shows that the results doubled. If the data results in zero, there was no change. If the data shows a negative percentage, there was an overall decrease to the average.

The researcher's analysis of the Pre/Post Survey are as follows:

- The couples' results doubled in the post survey for developing a family constitution.
- The couples decreased in having a monthly date.
- The couples increased by over 60% in following the family constitution, praying and studying the Bible together weekly.
- There was no change in practicing healthy eating and exercise.

- There was a small positive change in respect, money, making joint agreements, and understanding each spouse spiritual beliefs.
- The overall change in couples before and after was 26%

The above results are consistent with other researchers that couples with children decrease in their quality time alone, date night together and healthy eating and exercise. The 60% increase demonstrated that the couples developed and implemented a marriage tool when provided in the *MMEZ in 31 Days* which may propel the couple into greater agreement and upward mobility to wholeness. Respect, money, implementing joint agreements, and spiritual beliefs are essential in a couples' journey to wholeness. There are several factors that couples may consider to assist in these areas. The researcher provided earlier examples about improving finances. The researcher recommends that the couple research the tools provided in chapter 2 regarding respect, finances, and joint agreement. The couple may discuss each spouse's belief during family meetings.

The limitation in the above comparison of pre/post test results do not accurately reflect that couples overall was meeting some of the core needs in marriage. The true/false questionnaire provided after the couples completed *MMEZ in 31 Days* does demonstrate that the couples ranked high in meeting their spouse's core needs and are equipped with the tools for a MMEZ.

The researcher received ten pre-surveys, six post surveys, and six true/false questionnaires. Therefore, there were four post surveys not included in the average. The researcher was unable to determine the reason for the four people not completing the post survey and questionnaire or the impact on the results described above.

The differences between the pre and posttest results are as follows:

Questions	% Differential
1. My spouse and I have open and honest communication.	20.4
2. My spouse and I have regular family meetings with each other.	42.9
3. My spouse listens to me and respects my opinion.	5.7
4. I listen to my spouse and respect my spouse's opinion.	13.8
5. Major decisions are made after my spouse and I have discussed and agreed.	9.8
6. My spouse and I have a written Family Constitution.	139.6
7. My spouse and I have a written Family Vision.	25
8. I abide by our Family Constitution.	60.5
9. My spouse abides by our Family Constitution.	25.0
10. My spouse and I discuss and agree on household chores.	60.5
11. I regularly tell or show my spouse appreciation.	60.5
12. My spouse regularly tells or shows me appreciation.	25.0
13. My spouse and I have a written family budget.	17.1
14. My spouse and I discuss how money should be spent.	22.8
15. My spouse and I regularly discuss our written financial plans with each other.	21.6
16. My spouse and I have a joint bank account.	8.3
17. My spouse and I discuss our health goals.	23.8
18. My spouse and I practice healthy eating and exercise.	0.0
19. My spouse shares with me what they think is attractive (appearance, fragrance, hair).	22.8

20. I share with my spouse what I think is attractive (appearance, fragrance, hair).	22.8
21. My spouse and I regularly consult with each other to stay attractive.	32.2
22. My schedule demonstrates that my spouse is my priority above other family and friends.	41.4
23. My spouse and I have at least one monthly date by ourselves.	(10.3)
24. I share my sexual and affection needs with my spouse.	29.6
25. My spouse shares their sexual and affection needs with me.	32.4
26. I meet my spouse's sexual and affection needs.	32.4
27. My spouse meets my sexual and affection needs.	35.4
28. My spouse knows my spiritual beliefs.	5.1
29. I know my spouse's spiritual beliefs.	7.4
30. My spouse and I make it a daily priority to live together in peace.	20.8
31. My spouse and I study God's Word and pray together at least once a week.	66.7
*	
Average	26.2

True/False Questionnaire

True/False Summary; Key: All True = 100%

1. I always tell my spouse where I am going.	100
2. My spouse and I have regular family meetings.	83.3
3. My spouse gives me undivided attention.	83.3
4. I give my spouse undivided attention.	83.3
5. My spouse and I always make joint agreements.	66.7
6. My spouse and I follow a written schedule.	66.7
7. My spouse and I update our written Family Vision.	83.3

8. My spouse and I refer to our Family Constitution when making joint decisions.	88.3
9. My spouse and I fairly share household responsibilities.	88.3
10. I feel appreciated by my spouse regularly.	88.3
11. My spouse appreciates me regularly.	100
12. My spouse and I regularly follow a written family budget.	83.3
13. My spouse and I often agree on how money should be spent.	50.0
14. My spouse and I meet weekly or monthly to discuss our written financial plans.	83.3
15. My spouse and I agree on our health goals.	100
16. My spouse and I practice both healthy eating and exercise weekly.	50
17. I consider what my spouse think is attractive for my appearance, fragrance, and hair.	83.3
18. My spouse considers what I think is attractive for their appearance, fragrance, and hair.	100
19. My spouse and I honor each other above other family and friends.	100
20. My spouse and I have weekly quality time of at least four hours by ourselves.	100
21. My spouse and I discuss our sexual and affection needs.	33.3
22. My spouse and I have common spiritual goals.	83.3
23. My spouse and I make it a priority to attend church weekly.	100
24. My spouse and I make it a daily priority to study God's word.	100
25. My spouse and I pray and make faith declarations together daily.	83.3

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A 21st Century Resource Guide to Assist Couples in Maintaining the Fidelity (the quality of being faithful to your husband, wife...¹) and Sanctity (the quality or state of being holy, very important, or valuable²) of Marriage has been a transforming journey for the researcher and her family. The researcher believes that her best decision was partnering with Spirit of Faith Christian Center with senior Pastors Mike and DeeDee Freeman which immersed her into a weekly culture of healthy, whole families in every facet of life during bible study, worship, communion, financial peace university, women walking in the word, etc.. Additionally, the researcher attended Marriage Made E Z (MMEZ) conferences, attended MMEZ counseling sessions, partnered with a small group of families that also wanted to continue building strong families, studied authors/teachers that enabled her to drill down to daily applications of successful families, studied the Bible, prayed and made faith declarations with spouse daily, made herself accountable to others to stay on course, with her spouse updated their shared vision, long term and short term goals, schedule and budget.

Though UTS, the researcher participated in three peer groups, Christian Education, Kenneth Copeland Scholars and Prophetic Congregational Development

¹Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Fidelity," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fidelity>.

²Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Sanctity," [http://www.merriam-webster.com /dictionary /sanctity](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sanctity).

Using 21st Century Methods, Including a Womanist/Feminist Theological Perspective. Also partnering with Kenneth Copeland Ministries and Dr. Creflo Dollar Ministries and during a building tour of each of their respective headquarters expanded my vision. The researcher watches inspiration from Trinity Broadcasting Network, Daystar, Word Network and Inspiration for golden nuggets on applying God's word to my life. Meeting other believers/leaders from around the country, and participating in weekly prayer also encourage the researcher to stay the course and not quit.

The researcher believes that couples can have a marriage that is renewed through obtaining/learning the right tools with consistent application and accountability. It does not initially require both spouses to experience renewal. One spouse can choose to walk in faith and carry out proven principles that can impact the unwilling spouse to consider the same renewal process. The data reflects that the couples on average increased in application of relationship tools provided in MMEZ in 31 Days. Since the researcher valued honesty as one of the top priorities, she did not ask for specific demographic information for participants and controls were implemented to maintain confidential individual responses.

The researcher noted observations regarding demographics. The researcher observed that the bonds developed during small group discussions carried into fellowship with the kids that played in another section during the small group discussions. The kids encourage the parents to participate so that they too could have fun with their friends. The bond was even evident in the community where the couples work together in outreach.

The researcher believes that this model can be replicated. The accountability partner should be someone of the same sex who has your solution, instead of your

problem, for married couples. If couples believe that their marriage is a priority, it should be reflected in their weekly schedule and budget.

The researcher's recommendation for further research is for churches to embrace MMEZ in 31 Days and take the journey together. The power of a group atmosphere is dynamic on a spouse that may not be as enthusiastic about the journey. The church should encourage solid couples to become certified counselors to assist younger couples and couples with marital challenges.

Since the researcher was also a participant in the focus group, the journey was also personal and created challenges in documenting the results for confidential concerns. However, the benefits of being a participant were tremendous with having long term and short term goals, vision, constitution, making a schedule, and budget, and following them. Accountability to others was an important ingredient in the researcher's success. The researcher was not included in the pre/post-surveys and questionnaire results.

The researcher would be remised by not acknowledging that a Christian marriage requires giving agape love to a spouse as unto God. This may alleviate the need for a spouse's behavior to be contingent upon the other spouse. The faith to believe that a spouse submission to God will cover him/her when the other spouse may not be deserving of such benefits is similar to the example of Jesus' death was for the love He had for the church that was undeserving.

The researcher is convinced that choosing the right church can significantly impact the success of a marriage and family. A church focused on wholeness: health, mind, finance, family and spiritually is imperative to the overflow into the community. There are so many challenges facing marriage that the church can serve as a foundation

for education empowerment for wholeness, healing, restoration, and encouragement to not quit (the easier way). Having said that, there are absolutely times when a spouse physical/emotional safety must be protected and a physical separation/divorce may be necessary if the abusive spouse is not willing to take extreme measures to stop abusive behavior.

Spiritual warfare is necessary to intercede on behalf of a spouse/family. Satan attacked the first family and was successfully in altering God's perfect plan for humanity but through Jesus, every family can be restored to God's perfect plan of wholeness. Couples must be informed of proper tools to keep and sustain a healthy marriage and family. Fortunately, there is nothing new under the sun so the test/trials that are common to families have a solution in God's word. Marriage is work but those who do the work can experience the benefits.

If the researcher were to do the project again, the researcher would request each spouse to draw a numbers and use the same number for all surveys and questionnaires. This control would ensure that there are no duplicate numbers, the couples would still remain anonymous, the researcher would be able to better evaluate the individuals' progression before and after the tool was implemented, identify which numbers were missing in order to improve feedback and account for any missing questionnaires and/or surveys.

The researchers concluding thoughts on this project are that she and her family encountered spiritual warfare and obstacles because of this project. She believes that the spiritual attack is because God made mankind in His own image. Therefore, Satan and his followers are envious at God's favorite creation and want to do everything to destroy

mankind. The satanic plan in the garden was to use Eve to get to Adam and destroy the male seed. Satan knows that if he can get to the wife, it is easier to destroy the husband and ultimately the children.

Husband and Wives must realize that each role is vital to accomplish God's command to be fruitful, multiply, and take dominion. When the couple knows that they win, the distractions of test and obstacles will not derail their promise. Hearing and obeying God's voice is essential ingredient. "Employing your ministering angels/spirits to work by speaking God's word over your circumstances will turbo charge the results," Bro. Billy, SOFCC, 11-13-2014.

If the model is applied to couples that are preparing for marriage, they should do the exercises in MMEZ in 31 Days, and save the sex exercise until marriage. Couples who are recently married or happily married should also do MMEZ in 31 *Days* to take their marriage to a higher dimension. Couples who are experiences challenges, which is the majority of marriages according to statistics should routinely do MMEZ in 31 Days and follow the model provided closely. Even if there is only one willing spouse, that spouse should begin MMEZ in 31 Days in faith and share when possible the tools learned with the unwilling spouse. When done correctly, the unbelieving spouse will notice a difference in the willing spouse's behavior.

APPENDIX A
DIVINE FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

DIVINE FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES MINISTRY ACTION PLAN

1.0 Executive Summary

Divine Fellowship Ministries is a parent organization for mediation, referrals for marriage preparation and counseling, family day care, financial services, organization consulting and movie studio. The organization's reputation is impeccable and will be known throughout the east and west coast. Divine Fellowship Ministries serves the mediation needs of organizations and individuals to enable them to realize their goals.

2.0 Situation Analysis

Divine Fellowship Ministries offers referral expertise in all areas of mediation, marriage preparation and counseling, childcare, bookkeeping, financial-based planning, film writing and production. The organization will have a solid and loyal partner base in the market. DFM is supported with contributions from organizations and individuals.

2.1 Market Needs

Divine Fellowship Ministries provides tangible and intangible value. We work to make the complex understandable. We act in a referral role to our partners that will enable them to better influence and optimize their personal and/or corporate wealth and relationships. We desire to make them happier and give them a better night's sleep.

2.2 The Market

Divine Fellowship Ministries is a multi-purpose organization that serves the personal and organization needs for the community of east and west coast of the U.S. and international. Our most important partners are medium to large-size organizations that rely on our services for their organization consulting, financial planning and movie production as well as mediation needs. Our best partners value their time and resources, and seek to minimize their obligations. They do not like negative surprises. They realize and appreciate the value in the services we offer, along with the lost opportunity costs of not benefiting from our services.

2.2.1 Market Demographics

Individual Accounts - The base of individual partners offer consistent donations. Approximately 20% of these partners also depend on DFM for ongoing referrals of their relationship and life skill needs. The balance of our partners primarily look to the organization for planning and preparation.

Market Demographics

Market Segments	Benefits	Product Attitude	Loyalty Status	Buyer-readiness
Select Individual Accounts	Relationship Building	Positive	High	Ready for referrals

2.2.2 Market Trends

Market trends fall into two general categories: increasing referrals and partner growth.

Increasing use of media - Media has been a resource to increase efficiencies within the ministry. For example, producing in excess of 50% more work, and therefore better outreach, with the same resources due to the computer systems in place.

Key Partner growth - A cluster of our premier partners have experienced substantial success and growth. Meeting these partners' needs will "bring us along" to offer additional services and provide an opportunity for us to strategically expand the services we offer. As we gain expertise and establish our reputation in these areas, we market those to other partners and use them as a point of interest to attract new partners.

2.2.3 Market Growth

The anticipated growth rate of our combined target markets will average approximately 8.6%. This is due to the growth of expected organization as well as movement into the Los Angeles area. This growth rate will plateau in future years and is expected to remain constant for the foreseeable future.

Market Analysis

2.3.2 Service Offering

Our services offer expertise to enable our partners to better realize their objectives. Accomplishing this for our partners falls into these service areas:

Organization Partners

- Advising, planning, and preparation
- Consulting services, including:
 - Industry-specific referrals
 - At-risk organization mediation
 - Corporate mediation

Individual Partners

Referring, planning, and preparation for individuals

Referral services, including:

Personal Mediation

Family planning & Child care

Relationship and Financial planning

Providing quality service is also critical. Our organization and individual partner(s) judge our competence based on how we treat them. This is their primary - and in many cases their only - measurement of our capabilities. They ask themselves the following about our organization:

Do they act in a professional manner?

Do they know who I am?

Do they remember my name?

Are they genuinely concerned about my best interest?

Our services must be strong enough that each of our partners will answer positively to these questions.

2.3.3 Positioning

Divine Fellowship Ministries offers a unique team of professional mediation and referral staff with proven expertise as organization consultants. We will work to offer our services in an innovative manner to create a source for organization planning solutions that will be difficult to emulate. We offer a premium level of service and expect to receive premium contribution for those services.

2.3.4 SWOT Summary

The SWOT analysis addresses the strengths and weakness within Divine Fellowship and the opportunities and threats that exist in our environment. This analysis highlights areas to be leveraged and points out where we must improve within the organization and within our industry and market.

2.3.4.1 Strengths

A core of mediators that have established solid reputations within our market

High partner retention, providing consistent referrals to the organization.

Expertise in specific vertical markets of industries.

2.3.4.2 Weaknesses

Over-dependence on preparation work for individual and organization partners and, therefore, a lack of diversification in our contribution sources.

Difficulty in retaining non-partner mediators, as they move to smaller organizations that will make them partners sooner.

Being perceived as a non-traditional and maybe overlooked as a viable option for new partners.

2.3.4.3 Opportunities

Benefiting from the ongoing increase in population to the Los Angeles area, particularly for the movie segment.

Increasing income levels of the population over the age of 30 that have aggressively saved for the future and have increasingly complex planning needs.

Leveraging the positive perception organization has about locating in this section of Los Angeles County.

Growth that is occurring in three industries where we possess expertise; organization, governmental and movie.

2.3.4.4 Threats

Continued sophistication and affordability of software that replaces or minimizes the role of preparation, mediation, and referral services.

General perceptions that mediation organizations are only used for conflict aspects of business rather than as a valuable resource for broader organization referrals.

2.3.5 Historical Results

Our past outreach activities have produced mixed results. The following is a summary of those activities and categorizes them in terms of "successful" and "unsuccessful." A successful outreach activity contributions that were equal to or greater than the total investment into the activity, excluding time. An unsuccessful activity generated traceable contribution but was less than the cost of the effort.

Successful -

Referral-based activities; Professional referrals, Individual referrals.

Selective Sponsorships: Church community

Yellow pages: Competitive size ads for our area.

Unsuccessful -

Advertising (non-sponsorship based).
Service club participation

Additional work is required to better track contributions resulting from each of our outreach activities.

2.4 Competition

Other mediation organizations - Some organizations conduct business in our area that are comparable to Divine Fellowship in size and capabilities, including one that is a national organization. These organizations have staff and technology resources similar to ours, although their focus and areas of specialization vary.

Sole practitioners – There are sole practitioners that exist in the immediate area. This ranges from individuals that have been in business for over 20 years to those that are in their sixth month. Their resources are limited in terms of staff and technology.

2.4.1 Direct Competition

1. Strong competitors that have a strong image and very stable companies growing at a good pace.
2. Well known in the market and offer quality services.
3. The biggest threat other organizations pose to us is the strong strategic alliances that they have.

Growth and Share Analysis

3.0 Outreach Strategy

Our outreach strategies are based on meeting the needs of existing and future partners. We will do this through leveraging internal and external organization strengths and understanding the competitive environment. All outreach strategies work toward supporting our mission statement and realizing our stated goals.

Our outreach strategies fall into these three categories:

1. Contribution diversification, including service and industry specialization.
2. Fixed contribution structure focus.
3. Outreach awareness training.

3.1 Value Proposition

Providing quality service is critical. Our organization and individual partner(s) judge our competence based on how we treat them. This is their primary - and in many cases their only - measurement of our capabilities. Our Value Proposition to the partner is that we will do referrals, mediation, etc. better than they do it. We will work closely with our partners to make sure we know what their goals are, where they are financially and where they want to be in the future so that every service we provide is personal and custom-tailored for our partners.

3.2 Critical Issues

The organization appears to be approaching a "mature" category. We have relatively low major opportunities, fairly low threats, limited growth potential, and relatively low risk.

Critical issues for Divine Fellowship include:

- Retaining partners is essential and will be determined by maintaining our reputation built upon professionalism, trust, accuracy, and timeliness.
- Continuing to leverage our computer-based capabilities within the organization on a cost-effective basis.
- Tracking results to better understand which outreach activities offer the best return.
- Focusing on key market segments that will produce the greatest return.
- Educating our staff so everyone takes a role in outreach the organization and not leaving this responsibility to the few "rainmakers" that now account for a large percentage of new partners.

3.3 Financial Objectives

1. Contributions to realize a growth rate of 8.25%.
2. Expenses to increase no more than 3%.

3.4 Outreach Objectives

1. To realize an annual growth rate of 8.25% greater than the previous year.
2. To diversify our contribution stream through increased organization referral activities to account for 26% or more of total contributions.
3. To create a visible profile through establishing reciprocal referral sources with the following:
 - o (3) courts
 - o (2) law organizations
 - o (2) community
4. Train the entire staff to understand, appreciate, and reinforce their role in outreach the organization.

3.5 Target Market Strategy

Our primary target markets include these three areas:

1. Established organizations of more than 50 employees that value a mediation organization that offers comprehensive organization referral services, particularly those in the community, government and movie industries.
2. Growing organizations of less than 50 employees that need our services now and will rely on them to a greater extent as their organizations and requirements grow, particularly those that will benefit from areas of specialization.
3. Individual partners.

3.6 Messaging

Divine Fellowship Ministries offers a unique team of professional mediation and referral staff with proven expertise as organization consultants. We provide a variety of valuable services that enable an organization to optimize their potential. We want to make sure that our outreach never loses site of our strengths as an organization:

Expertise and Personal Service to Maximize our Partners' Well-being.

3.6.1 Branding

Divine Fellowship Ministries needs to brand itself as the professional, mediator, referral consultants. It is important that people associate Divine Fellowship MINISTRIES with expertise and personal service. Our outreach materials both offline and online will need to reflect this brand message.

Target Market Messaging

Market Segments

Messaging

Large Organization

Improve teamwork

Growth Organization

Understand opportunities for financial growth

Select Individual Accounts

Personalize the referral process

3.7 Strategy Pyramids

Divine Fellowship's strategy is focused on leveraging our existing strengths. We will strive to expand our outreach. This is an important factor in differentiating the organization. All tactics to implement this strategy include leveraging the quality of our

work and our in-house computer capabilities. We have filled out three strategies in the strategy pyramids below.

4.0 Outreach Mix

Our experience has proven that the most significant factor in acquiring new partners is a direct result of referrals. In 2009, our new partners will directly or indirectly result from a referral by an individual or organization partner. Partner retention is essential. Receiving referrals from them will determine our success or failure. People ask other people they know, trust, and share a similar position to tell them what organization to use. It is as simple as that. Our outreach mix will consistently work to optimize the volume and quality of those referrals.

4.1 Product Outreach

We need to fulfill the promise we make to each partner - to provide them with the resources they need to reach their organization and personal goals, with unwavering confidence in our organization throughout that process and, ultimately, throughout their lives.

4.2 Contribution

Divine Fellowship will seek to provide a premium service that offers the best overall value to our partners. Ultimately, our partners will realize greater success as a result of their ability to optimize their resources.

4.3 Promotion

We will promote the organization through these critical outreach components:

1. Leverage referrals from professional contacts and individual partners to make this an integral part of how we conduct organization.
2. Enhance our profile within our targeted industries and areas of specialization by increasing our reputation for possessing unique expertise in these areas.
3. Have the expectation that all partners will take on the task of outreach for the organization as they approach their other areas of responsibility. We will track, give back, and acknowledge efforts, accomplishments, and results from these actions.
4. Continue to use the technology we have, including our in-house computer capabilities and our website. Both possess incredible potential for future differentiation in an increasingly competitive market.

We will focus on getting referrals from:

- courts
- community
- law organizations
- real estate organizations

Our referrals hinge upon key relationships with individuals and organizations. Often a partner will be with their lawyer, banker, stock broker, etc. and realize that they need mediation and referral help. Sometimes the professional they are with might want to suggest that they see a mediation organization. By building these outreach relationships we will also build a pipeline for new partners.

4.3.1 Advertising

We will advertise on the web, word of mouth, at conferences as we want to attract local and national partners. Eventually, we will expand to invest in national advertising in national magazines.

We will also advertise online making sure that people always find us when they are looking for a mediation and referral organization. Our website needs to clearly communicate our purpose so that when we drive traffic to it -- it results in leads into our organization.

4.3.2 Public Relations

It will be important for us to use PR to maintain our image in the community, and to remain known as THE experts in our industry. We will issue Press Releases whenever one of our partners speaks at an event, or teaches a class. We will also issue press releases when we get big partners on board, assuming we have the partner's permission.

4.3.3 Direct Outreach

We will send out direct outreach mainly to current partners. We will send out a quarterly referral newsletter, as well as planning information twice per year. We will use a direct outreach agency to make sure that our mailings look professional and use professional designs and high quality content.

4.4 Web Plan

Our website is not currently live. The main focus of our Internet presence will be to serve as a permanent, always-accessible information and branding tool for prospective partners, with a secondary goal of providing partner-only features.

4.4.1 Website Goals

Our website goals are as follows:

1. Convey professional, expert, yet personal brand
2. Communicate with current partners
3. Prospect future partners

4.4.2 Website Outreach Strategy

Our web site outreach strategy is very simple. We need to have an up-to date very professional website that reflects the brand and image of our organization. When a lawyer, or banker or stock broker refers a partner to us, we want them to be able to visit us online and get a very good sense of who we are, what we do, and why we are the best.

We will do some very basic pay-per-click online advertising in local portals in order to attract partners who are searching for our services. Other than that, our website will be used mainly to attract word of mouth referrals and will be used to continue to market and communicate with our existing partners.

4.4.3 Development Requirements

We need to have:

1. A partner-only secure area where partners can access relevant information to their account
2. We need to be able to send regular newsletters to partners and prospective partners
3. We need to have fresh updated content relevant to our industry
4. We need to revamp our "About the Organization" section of our website.

4.5 Service

Our organization and individual partner(s) judge our competence based on how we treat them. This is their primary - and in many cases their only - measurement of our

capabilities. We must ensure that each of our partners will answer positively to these questions:

- Do they act in a professional manner?
- Do they know who I am?
- Do they remember my name?
- Are they genuinely concerned about my best interest?

4.6 Implementation Schedule

The milestones graphic illustrates key implementation activities. Each partner understands the programs, and they have been assigned to oversee specific actions involved with each. We will track plan-vs.-actual results for each program. Status and progress will be addressed at the monthly partners meeting and reported to all of our staff in our monthly bulletin.

This will be a topic of focus at the end-of-the-year partners' meeting to evaluate annual results and validate or challenge the outreach plan for the upcoming year.

4.7 Outreach Plan

Our outreach plan hinges on making a good impression from the moment partners or potential partners walk in the door or call. It costs us much more to gain a new partner than to retain an existing one, so our main outreach goal is to increase referrals from existing partners.

4.7.1 Outreach Strategy

We should focus our strategy on increasing referrals with current partners while still giving them a lot of value for their contributions, as well as converting new partners.

4.7.2 Outreach Process

Once we get a new partner referral we will make sure we set up a welcome meeting for them at no charge. This way the new partner will have an opportunity to spend at least one hour with the relevant professional asking questions and understanding the services that we offer.

All prospective partners will also receive a packet with relevant information:

1. What services we offer
2. How we implement those services

3. Which account manager will see them through all services and will be their "go to" person
4. Happy partner testimonials

5.0 Financials

The outreach plan is based on these three parameters:

1. Increasing our efficiencies through better use of our facilities and expertise. Variable costs will be reduced, as we are able to make use of the capital investment we have in our systems. We will invest in these systems with the expectation that we will benefit as we have in the past from their capabilities.
2. We will continue to invest in outreach activities based on a percent of total contributions. As our contributions increase, so will our outreach resources.
3. We will forecast and track contributions on a detail basis to provide objective feedback regarding progress in the areas of industry expertise, specialization, and partner contribution sources by type.

5.1 Break-even Analysis

Our variable costs are less than 38% of contributions. This is a result of our fixed costs including our facility, computer and technology expenses, and our salaried staff. Variable costs include temporary/seasonal hires, compensation for mediators based on performance, and partner demands that require travel and other per-job based expenditures. Variable costs are expected to continue to decrease as a percent of contributions as we strive to further benefit from technology and become less dependent on wages and salaries.

5.2 Linking Expenses to Strategy and Tactics

Our outreach expenses represent a small portion of total contribution generated, as illustrated on the following graph. Regardless, outreach-based efforts and our outreach expenditures must produce results. Our Outreach Director tracks this correlation and reports to the partners regarding our progress at our scheduled meetings. We expect to see our strategies impact the bottom line in the preferred areas. Our relatively conservative approach appears to be a good fit. An unexpected decrease in contributions will impact our outreach budget, and we will address this issue if required.

5.3 Contribution Margin

Contribution margins should increase as a result of these factors:

1. Increased efficiencies and contribution through specialization.
2. Increased efficiencies through use of our available technology.
3. Economies of scale from growth and better utilization of capacity.
4. More evenly spreading work out throughout the calendar year.

6.0 Controls

The focus of this outreach plan is to initiate action that will generate additional contributions for Divine Fellowship and better position us for the future. These outreach challenges exist:

We offer intangible "products."
Our partners evaluate our capabilities based on things they see and hear.
Outreach is not well understood or received within our profession.

Putting our outreach plan into action through the use of professional and credible techniques is what it is all about.

6.1 Implementation

We will maintain our focus with brief milestones meetings every month, making sure each partner understands his or her responsibility for maintaining our image, improve partner relations management, and increasing contributions.

6.2 Keys to Success

Continue to leverage the in-house computer system to keep efficiencies high and costs, specifically payroll, to a minimum.
Further develop areas of specialization to attract and retain key partners.
Continue to develop partner referrals from individuals and organization contacts.
Outreach training to develop networking and other outreach skills within the professional staff.

6.3 Market Research

We will continue to research to better understand demographic and psychographic data for our region. Additional research will involve tracking outreach activities, gathering data on key organization partners and their industries, and watching the evolution of software and its impact on our industry.

6.4 Contingency Planning

These are the most likely changes in the outreach plan:

Industry or economic downturns - At this time, the targeted industries are experiencing solid growth in our area. If industry growth does not occur, we will re-examine our select industries and/or activities and change our focus and direction.

Online services - Competition from any geographic location may emerge from online services conducted by larger and better funded organizations.

6.5 Plans

We will have software in place to track all of our partners which also integrates with our referral and mediation system. Our current system, allows us to store contact information, account history, and additional notes added to our partner by employees at our organization. We can also tag a partner with a "category" to help us better serve that partner with appropriate information.

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